OSPREY MILITARY

MEN-AT-ARMS SERIES 56

THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR 1846-1848

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First published in Great Britain in 1976 by
Osprey Publishing, Elms Court, Chapel Way, Botley,
Oxford OX2 9LP United Kingdom
Email: info@ospreypublishing.com

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Reprinted 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998, 2000

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ISBN 0 85045 253 8

Filmset in Great Britain
Printed in China through World Print Ltd.

FOR A CATALOGUE OF ALL BOOKS PUBLISHED BY OSPREY MILITARY, AUTOMOTIVE AND AVIATION PLEASE WRITE TO:

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PO Box 130, Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0130, USA.
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The Mexican - American War 1846-1848

'There never was so fine an American army,' wrote a young second-lieutenant, John Sedgwick, in describing the troops under Major-General Zachary Taylor in 1846.

Another second-lieutenant, in his life to see many larger armies, U. S. Grant, recalled years later:

'The victories in Mexico were, in every instance, over vastly superior numbers. There were two reasons for this. Both General Scott and General Taylor had such armies as are not often got together. At the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, General Taylor had a small army, but it was composed exclusively of regular troops, under the best of drill and discipline. Every officer, from the highest to the lowest, was educated in his profession, not at West Point necessarily, but in the camp, in garrison, and many of them in Indian wars. The rank and file were probably inferior, as material out of which to make an army, to the volunteers that participated in all the later battles of the war; but they were brave men, and then drill and discipline brought out all there was in them.'

The army had been reduced during the peace which followed its last major war, in 1812. On 23 August 1842 Congress reduced infantry and artillery companies to 42 men each, and companies in the one dragoon regiment to 50 men, as an economy measure. The army was authorized to have 734 officers and 7,885 other ranks, a total of 8,619, as of April 1846. There were actually only some 6,562 all ranks present for duty then, with another 803 absent.

On 13 May 1846 100 men per company were authorized, and next year nine more regular infantry and another mounted regiment were

'The army on the march in the Valley of Mexico', by James Walker. Note the coloured bands on the dragoons' caps and the mounted infantry officer wearing a Mexican-made poncho or serape. (West Point Museum Collections, U.S.M.A.)

authorized to serve the war's duration.

According to Grant, those in the regular army '. . . were principally foreigners who had enlisted in our large cities . . .' Enlistees were given a $12 bounty, on top of the $7 monthly pay, and 160 acres of land at their enlistments' ends. Enlistments were for five years or the war's duration, at the enlistee's choice. Volunteers who served a full year received the same land bonus, but only 40 acres if they served less than a year. One New Yorker, enlisting in the regulars, was promised 'roast beef, two dollars a day, plenty of whiskey, golden Jesuses [as loot in Mexico] and pretty Mexican gals.'

Recruits received their initial training at camps of instruction before being sent to their regiments. Private Barna Upton, 3rd Infantry, wrote from the New York camp, '. . . Almost every kind of men you will find in the Army and a good many who are well educated. I am acquainted with one who has been a preacher, with three or four who have been schoolteachers, clerks, etc., and there is any quantities of shoemakers, carpenters, tailors, blacksmiths, etc., etc' Later he wrote, 'I have found even in this Army, where it cannot be denied the majority are profane and wicked, some who possess the true principles of consistent and intelligent men.'

Some 47 per cent of Taylor's regulars were foreigners, with 24 per cent Irish and 10 per cent German. The anti-foreign riots which had swept American cities during the period had forced many of them into the army for their own safety. Most of them ended up in the infantry and West Point graduates, therefore, wanted commissions in other corps to avoid any association with them. The foreigners were aware of this and quite resented '. . . the insolent and impertinent tone assumed by native Americans to all foreigners.'

Dragoons were generally natives and therefore commissions among them were sought after. Private Samuel Chamberlain, 1st Dragoons, felt that:

'. . . the Dragoons were far superior in materials to any other arm of the service. No man of any spirit and ambition would join the "Doughboys," [slang for infantrymen] and go afoot, when he could ride a fine horse and wear spurs like a gentleman. In our Squadron were broken-down Lawyers, Actors and men of the world, Soldiers who had served under Napoleon, Polish Lancers, French Cuirassiers, Hungarian Hussars, Irishmen who had left the Queen's service to swear allegiance to Uncle Sam and wear the blue.

'Our officers were all graduates of West Point, and at the worst, were gentlemen of intelligence and education, often harsh and tyrannical, yet they took pride in having their men well clothed and fed, in making them contented and reconciled to their lot.'

Officers did tend to be rather harsh. One British veteran, who had joined the American army, thought it incredible that '. . . conceited Yankee subalterns should be free to strike enlisted men at the slightest provocation and inflict painful, humiliating punishments.' Striking was done with a rawhide whip, which British veterans claimed was at least six times as agonizing as the 'cat' used in the British Army.

Certain officers were especially hated but their men found ways to handle them. Colonel J. J. Hardin, 1st Illinois, fell in action at Buena Vista. Chamberlain reported, 'On examining his body it was discovered that the shot which broke his thigh bone was fired by his own men (there being Buckshot in it). This was considered accidental, but believed otherwise, as battles often decide private grievances, as well as those of nations.' One soldier rolled an eight-inch shell, with lit fuse, under Captain Braxton Bragg's cot. The shell exploded; the cot and tent were totally destroyed, Bragg, amazingly, was completely unhurt.

The Mexicans were aware of the anti-foreigner and especially anti-Catholic feelings of Americans. They offered 200 acres of land to any deserting private, with 100 acres extra per year of service, and 500 acres for sergeants with 250 acres extra per year. They printed strong pleas for Catholics to desert and abandon their 'unholy cause'. All told, 2,850 regulars and 3,900 volunteers deserted.

Despite all this, a regular captain was probably closer to the army's overall feelings when he wrote in 1846, 'There is a "physique" and "morale" about our "little army" . . . Well-clad, well-fed, and well-armed; moving forward with an enthusiasm and "sang froid" which carries victory in their face. I feel more and more convinced that we can successfully contend with an immensely superior force.' Lieutenant G. G. Meade was worried

Regimental colour of the 6th U.S. Infantry with battle honours. Oddly enough, the 6th, as a regiment, was not at Palo Alto or Resaca de la Palma. (West Point Museum Collections, United States Military Academy)

they wouldn't get into action fast enough. 'We are all anxious to give them [the Mexicans] a sound thrashing before volunteers arrive, for the reputation of the army; for should we be unable to meet them before they come, and then gain a victory, it would be said the volunteers had done it, and without them we were useless. For our existence, therefore, we desire to encounter them.' Encouraging words from the officers who would bear the brunt of battle. Since there was no retirement system, senior officers stayed in the army as long as physically possible, meaning many were not physically fit and the junior officers would actually command in the field.

Many of those senior officers received their commissions in the War of 1812 and had no West Point education. Their service had been in small detachments, rarely seeing anything as large as a battalion together. The 3rd Infantry's colonel claimed that even Taylor could not form a brigade into line, and of all the senior officers, only Colonel Twiggs could do so, '. . . after a fashion of his own. As for manoeuvering, not one of them can move it a step.' He continued, 'Egotism or no egotism, I am the only field officer who could change a single position of the troops according to any but a militia mode.'

To solve this problem, the army on the Rio Grande spent most of its time drilling. Meade wrote all his time was spent in '. . . nothing but drill and parades, and your ears are filled all day with drumming and fifeing.' As volunteers arrived, they received six hours of drill daily. Later, volunteer units were sent to schools of instruction to be drilled with regulars.

When not working the men had to be entertained and therefore, for the first time in American military history, the civilian standard of living was brought to the field. Theatres were opened, with professional actors and dancing girls; newspapers printed; ice, liquor, fancy tobaccos and groceries were sold, and gambling halls and bars thrived—all wherever the army moved.

Another constant companion of the army was disease. Six men died of disease to every one killed in action. Total American strength reached 115,906 all ranks, of which 103.8 men per thousand died of disease. Of the 42,374 regulars, 4,900 died of disease or accident, with another 4,149 being discharged due to disability, while only 930 were killed in combat. Of the 60,913 volunteers, 6,400 died of disease or accident, another 9,200 were discharged due to disability and only 600 were killed in action.

The volunteers had less combat deaths, however, because they saw less combat than the regulars, not because they were less anxious to get into the fight.

National colour of the 13th U.S. Infantry. (West Point Museum Collections, United States Military Academy)

Captain Stanilaus Lasselle, Cass County Volunteers, 1st Indiana Regiment, 1846. (Cass County, Indiana, Historical Society)

Second Sergeant Jacques M. Lasselle, Cass County Volunteers, 1st Indiana Regiment, 1846. (Cass County, Indiana, Historical Society)

The Volunteers

On 13 May 1846 President James Polk called for 50,000 volunteers to serve a year, in quotas from the various states. From North Carolina, for example, one infantry regiment of ten companies was called for—and thirty-two volunteer companies signed up to go! Enthusiasm quickly waned, and the North Carolina Regiment had only nine companies, none of which was completely filled. Virginia had so much difficulty recruiting her regiment, her recruiters had to go into Maryland to get men.

Volunteers were to supply their own uniforms, horses and horse equipment, with the U.S. government supplying arms. States were paid to procure uniforms, and many individual companies designed their own. 'We were uniformed as every company selected,' recalled Chamberlain, originally a member of the 2nd Illinois, 'and strange grotesque costumes now filled the Camp. Ours, Co. A, 2nd Regiment, made choice of jacket and pants of blue mixed Kentucky jeans with yellow stripes across the chest like a Dragoon Bugler. By permission I had mine made with dark blue cloth, with only my Sergeant's chevrons, and it was quite a neat affair.'

Others selected even odder dress. The Kentucky volunteers, all full-bearded, wore three-cornered hats and hip boots lined with red morocco. The 1st Mississippi were described by Chamberlain in '. . . a red shirt worn outside of their white duck pants, and black slouch hats, armed with Windsor Rifles, and eighteen-inch Bowie Knives.'

Some states took control of the dress situation and issued their own orders. On 5 June 1846 the adjutant-general of Indiana ordered:

For uniforms for service, a cloth or forage cap and gray mixed or sky blue jeans, hunters frock coat and pantaloons without stripes is suggested (not required) for neatness and comfort. The coat reaching half down the thigh, double breasted, double row of white military buttons, eagle stamped, or black mould buttons, made to button

close around the throat. For non-commissioned officers, same as above, only the Sergeants are to wear white worsted epaulettes on each shoulder and the pants to have a white worsted stripe one and one-half inches wide down the sides. Corporals to wear epaulettes but not the stripes. The orderly Sergeant is distinguished by a red worsted sash on duty. No dress uniform was required.

Despite the rules, there were differences. Company E, 3rd Indiana, '. . . had purchased uniforms of bright blue jeans and had styled themselves "Brown County Blues" a name by which they were known all through the war.' A member of Company G, 1st Indiana, wrote on 19 June 1846, 'We are getting our uniforms made and are to have blue cloth tight bodied coats trimmed with silver lace and three rows of buttons on the breast—pants of blue satinet, also trimmed with silver lace—no vest—caps of cloth with glazed leather tops, all of which will cost about $18.00.'

The 5th Indiana, made up of veterans of the first regiments, was ordered on 31 August 1847 to have 'a service uniform ... of a blue cloth roundabout and pantaloons without stripes or straps, the roundabout to be double breasted with a double row of white metal buttons, eagle stamped and made to button tight at the throat. The commissioned officers are to wear blue cloth frock coats and a single row of buttons and pantaloons with white worsted stripes one and one-half inches wide down the sides.'

Captain J. R. Kenly, Baltimore-Washington Volunteers, recalled that his unit in 1846 '. . . was dressed in the regular blue uniform and equipments of the regular troops of the line of the army, and was the only command of volunteers thus equipped that I am aware of at this time.' As a result, his men often got into fights with other volunteers when they '. . . were forever wandering about, and frequently came into collision with volunteers from other States, who, being mostly from the rural districts, had some curious-looking uniforms and hats, and would not understand the character or take the fun of these city fellows, particularly as they were dressed in [regular] army uniforms.'

Kenly did approve of'. . . a fine company from Washington (which) . . . was a rifle company, handsomely dressed in dark blue jackets and pants, and attracted marked attention from our weather-beaten companies from the same city,' in December 1848.

Service in Mexico was very hard indeed on uniforms and most quickly wore out. After Monterey Kenly wrote that 'our men begin to need clothing, particularly shoes; the long marches have been very destructive to the latter, and many of the men have made sandals from raw hide, which look right well; on parade, there are a good many without jackets, yet they look soldier-like and trim with their cross- and waist-belts.'

It was an exciting day for Private T. D. Tennery, 4th Illinois, on 6 February 1847 when he wrote in his diary, 'Colonel Baker came out from town this morning . . . [which is a] joy for the regiment. Baker has brought clothing for the regiment.'

Other regiments were not lucky enough to have a commanding officer who would go home and return with new clothes. Even the regulars became ragged. Grant recalled in late 1847 :

General Scott had been unable to get clothing for the troops from the North. The men were becoming—well, they needed clothing. Material had to be purchased, such as could be obtained, and people employed to make it up into 'Yankee uniforms'. A quartermaster in the city was designated to attend to this special duty; but clothing was so much needed that it was seized as fast as made up. A regiment was glad to get a dozen suits at a time.

Since they couldn't get replacements for their fancy dress from home, volunteers began to draw regular uniforms for themselves. On 26 January 1848, Congress changed the system to give volunteers uniforms instead of money. There was some grumbling about this. One Indiana soldier said, 'Let 'em go to hell with their sky blue. I'll be blowed if they make a Regular out of me.'

It was actually unlikely that simply putting the undisciplined volunteers into sky blue would turn them into regulars. While most of the field officers were quite good, often West Pointers, many company level officers were elected by the men and were incompetent. One captain was elected by the following speech:

Fellow citizens! I am Peter Goff, the Butcher of Middletown! I am! I am the man that shot that sneaking, white livered Yankee abolitionist son of a bitch, Lovejoy! I did! I want to be your Captain, I

A self-portrait of Lieutenant J. M. Hollingsworth of the unit variously known as the 7th New York, California Regiment, New York Legion, California Guards and the 1st New York. (California Historical Society)

do; and I will serve the yellow bellied Mexicans the same. I will! I have treated you to fifty dollars worth of whiskey, I have, and when elected Captain I will spend fifty more, I will!

Almost needless to say, his camp, wrote Chamberlain, '. . . was one great scene of drunkenness and debauchery; officers as well as the men seemed to defy all military restraint and vie with each other who would commit the greatest excesses.'

Drinking led to fighting. On 7 September 1846 five companies of the 1st Georgia broke into a fight in which a newspaper reported, '. . . firearms and bayonets and swords were very freely used.' The whole 4th Illinois was needed to quell it, in the process having two of their men killed and four more wounded, with two officers bayoneted.

Volunteer officers were as hot-headed as their men. Chamberlain once sneaked into an officer's party and a 1st Virginia lieutenant spotted him eating at their table. Without a word, the lieutenant swung a champagne bottle at Chamberlain, who ducked. The bottle ended up in the face of a North Carolina major, who promptly socked the lieutenant. Whereupon, a general punch-up broke out between all the officers.

When not fighting each other, volunteers were just as happy picking on Mexicans. The 1st Kentucky was especially noted for such attacks, and Taylor threatened to send the unit home in disgrace after a twelve-year-old boy working in the fields was murdered by some of the unit. Only after unit officers promised to stop the outrages and punish the culprits did Taylor revoke his orders. Taylor found Texans to be the worst, committing 'shameful atrocities'. At the first chance, he sent them home, stating, 'With their departure we may look for a restoration of quiet and order.' He requested no more Texas reinforcements.

Obviously the regulars would have to form the main American army.

The Infantry

Most regulars were members of the sixteen infantry regiments. Each regiment was to be made up of a colonel, a lieutenant-colonel, a major, an adjutant (a lieutenant), a sergeant-major, a quartermaster-sergeant and two principal musicians. Taylor later added the post of quartermaster, also a lieutenant. There were to be ten companies, each with a captain, a first-lieutenant, two second-lieutenants, four sergeants, four corporals, two musicians and 100 privates. Three laundresses per company were also authorized.

According to Scott's *Infantry Tactics,* published in 1840:

In every regiment of ten companies, two will be denominated *flank* companies and eight *battalion* companies. One of the flank companies will be denominated *grenadiers,* and posted on the right of the battalion: the other, *light infantry,* or *rifle* (according to the arm), and posted on the left of the battalion. The eight battalion companies will habitually be posted from right to left, in the following order: first, fifth, fourth, seventh, third, eighth, sixth, second, according to the rank of captains.

One man per company was named a pioneer and a corporal commanded the regimental pioneer section.

Surgeons were either from the medical corps or hired civilians. The Baltimore-Washington Volunteers hired one for $100 a month and Kenly reported that, 'There were a good many of these *contract* surgeons, as they were termed, now with the army . . .' Each regiment had a full band which, in action, was to remove wounded from the field.

Home for the regular infantryman was his regiment. Upton wrote with pride, 'The Third Regiment is acknowledged to be the best disciplined regiment in the United States and [I] have nothing to say to the contrary. Every finger and toe and joint must be placed exactly according to custom, and I rather conclude that I can come it equal to the old buck.'

Regimental pride was shown in good uniforms. Upton wrote:

The soldiers are allowed three uniform coats and caps in the five years, the first, third and fifth years; one fatigue jacket every year; four pair boots and stockings every year; two pair woolen pants; one pair cotton ditto; one cotton jacket; one pair drawers; two flannel shirts [and] two cotton ones in a year; three blankets in the five years. Knapsacks and haversacks and arms are loaned to the soldiers by [the] Government.

The officer's dress cap, according to 1834 regulations, was of 'black beaver, seven and a half inches deep, with lacquered sunk tip seven and a half inches diameter, from an upright step, eight inches long, with a gilt socket.

'The cap of the non-commissioned officers, musicians, and privates to be of the same pattern as that designated for the officers . . .' On front were a white metal hunting horn and regimental number. Over that were a brass eagle and socket. The socket held a white worsted plume twelve inches long for sergeant-majors, a light blue twelve-inch-long plume for quartermaster sergeants and chief musicians, a ten-inch-long plume for musicians, and a white eight-inch-long plume for sergeants, corporals and privates. Officers' caps bore drooping white horsehair.

According to Colonel George Crogham, western inspector-general, the caps were 'much complained of, and not worn except for parade and guard.

Dark blue dress coats were cut at the waist in front, with long tails and white turnbacks. They

The Mormon Battalion halts for water. After the expedition to Santa Fe, the battalion was sent to California. Composed almost entirely of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, raised in Iowa in July 1846, it was one of the best volunteer regiments raised. (Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints Historical Department)

were piped in white down the front and around the three-pointed vertical pocket flaps. Collars were trimmed with white wool worsted tape in the form of two buttonholes, and more tape all around the collar's edge. Officers wore two rows of silver buttons, while other ranks had one row of white metal buttons.

Rank was indicated by the shako plume and number of buttonholes on the cuffs. Privates and corporals wore two white worsted tape buttonholes on each cuff, while sergeants had three and sergeant-majors four. Officers had silver lace buttonholes on their cuffs, with two for a lieutenant, three for a captain and four for a field officer. Collars were also trimmed with silver lace.

All ranks wore epaulettes which also indicated rank. Officers wore their regimental number in a circle in the centre of the crescent. A colonel wore gold straps with a silver eagle on each strap and a half-inch bullion fringe $3^1/_2$ inches long. The lieutenant-colonel's was the same, without the eagles. Infantry majors wore gold straps with silver bullion fringes of the same type as the colonels' (other corps wore these colours reversed). A captain's silver epaulettes had quarter-inch bullions, $2^1/_2$ inches long. The lieutenant's had an eighth-inch bullion of the captain's length.

The sergeant-major had two white worsted epaulettes, with bullion fringes. Each sergeant had 'two worsted epaulettes corresponding in pattern to those of a captain'. The corporal had 'two epaulettes of the pattern for the subalterns of the same materials of the sergeant'. Privates' epaulettes were like corporals', but fringeless.

Trousers were sky blue wool, cut snugly as were coats. Officers and sergeants wore a $1^1/_2$-inch wide white worsted stripe down each leg, while corporals and privates had plain trousers.

For fatigue a short, tail-less sky-blue wool jacket, made with a single row of fifteen white metal buttons, was worn. The standup collar was trimmed the same as dress coats. The jacket had shoulder tabs on each shoulder trimmed with white tape. The tight sleeves ended in a slit cuff with two buttons on each one. A similar jacket, of white cotton and quite plain, was worn in hot climates with plain white cotton trousers.

For rank distinction, according to the 1847 dress regulations, chevrons were worn on both sleeves, 'as a badge of distinction when in *fatigue dress*' For foot troops these were worn points up. The sergeant-major had three bars and three arcs. The quartermaster-sergeant wore three bars with three ties. The orderly-sergeant had three bars and a lozenge, or diamond. The sergeant simply had three bars and the corporal two. It is not known if these were worn on the white fatigue coats as well as the wool.

For every five years' service, the soldier could apparently wear a dark blue chevron, point up, on his cuff. Service in war was marked by a narrow red edge on the chevron.

Officers wore their dress trousers on fatigue, as did the men. The officers' coats, however, were dark blue frock coats, single breasted for company officers and double breasted for field officers. With both uniforms, officers wore their crimson silk sashes, tied on the left, around their waists.

Rank was signified for officers in their fatigue coats by shoulder straps, with a silver embroidered edging around a dark blue background, worn on both shoulders. A second-lieutenant had plain ones; a first-lieutenant, a single bar at each end; a captain, two bars at each end; a major, plain straps; a lieutenant-colonel, an oak leaf at each end, and a colonel, a large eagle. Brigadier-generals had a single star, and major-generals two.

Similar forage caps were worn by both officers and other ranks. They were made of dark blue wool with a leather visor and chinstrap. Originally, they were to have white bands around their bottoms, but no original ones like that have been found, nor do many, if any, such caps appear in contemporary illustrations. Instead, other ranks' caps were made with blue wool earflaps, which folded up outside the cap and tied together in front—which would hide any coloured band underneath. The first forage caps of this basic design were issued in 1825 and then the men were to wear their company letters while officers wore regimental numbers. It seems as if at this later period some men did wear company letters, probably depending on their commander's wishes. Officers were to have no coloured band, but a gold embroidered jager horn with a regimental number in its centre on the cap's front. While probably not universal, this may have been done from time to time, too.

About 1836 the 7th Infantry adopted, without

Dark blue coat and trousers worn by Major W. H. Polk, 1st North Carolina Regiment. The buttons are brass and each leg has a narrow white stripe down it. (North Carolina Museum of History)

authorization, a waistbelt to replace the shoulder belt previously used to carry the bayonet. The Ordnance Department preferred the old belts; the infantry, the new—and the infantry won out. About 1841 all infantrymen received whitened buff leather, narrow waistbelts with brass oval belt plates in front bearing the letters 'US'. A black leather bayonet scabbard was slipped on to this belt, and worn on the left hip.

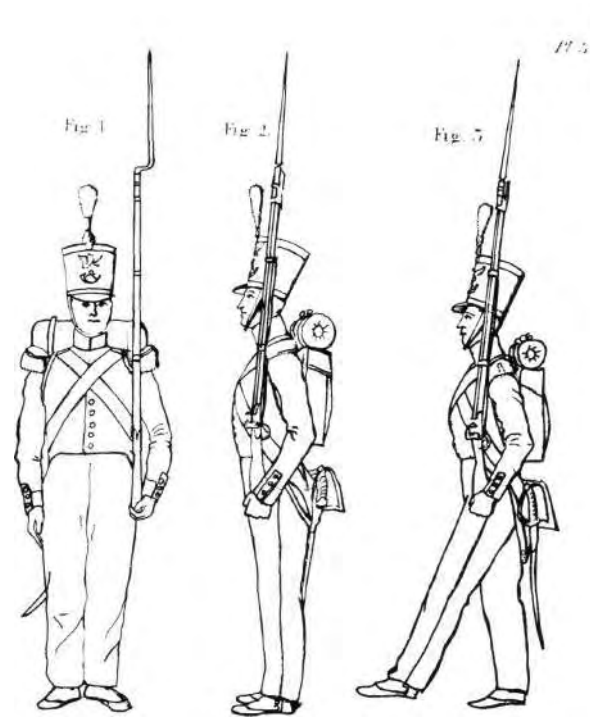
Another whitened buff leather belt, about two inches wide, hung from the left shoulder to the right hip and buckled to the bottom of the black leather cartridge box. The box held forty rounds of paper-wrapped ammunition in tin dividers. The box had an oval plate, like the waistbelt plate, on its flap to give it enough weight to stay down in action. A circular brass plate, with an eagle design, was worn on the crossbelt's centre.

At Molino del Rey a Mexican about to bayonet an officer was quickly stabbed by a sergeant with his sword. Non-commissioned officers above the grade of corporal wore their model 1840, straight-bladed, brass-hilted swords in action. These were carried on a wide whitened buff leather crossbelt with a double frog to carry both sword and bayonet. The crossbelt plate was then worn on the swordbelt, not on the cartridge box sling. Sergeants also wore their scarlet worsted sashes, knotted at the left, around their waists at most times.

Water-bottles were wood, made like small kegs, and painted light blue. They were usually marked 'US' or with a regimental number in white. They were carried, slung across the body, on the left, over the white duck haversack. The haversack was buttoned with two pewter buttons, and marked in black with the soldier's regimental number, company letter and his own number.

What the soldier didn't carry in his haversack went into his knapsack. These were made of canvas or india-rubber, painted black, on a rigid wooden frame. On the back they were painted with the regimental number, $1^1/_2$ inches tall, in white. Red or dingy brown blankets were carried rolled on top of the knapsack. Knapsack straps were supposedly black, but troops under Scott appear to have whitened theirs.

They also appear to have whitened the musket slings which Ordnance regulations stated were russet 'bag leather'.



These plates from Winfield Scott's *Infantry Tactics*, the official U.S. manual, show the soldier at attention with shouldered musket and marching. The winter dress uniform is worn.

These slings were usually attached to Model 1835 flintlock muskets. This smoothbore musket, a copy of the French Model 1822 musket, was 0.69 calibre, 57.75 inches long and weighed about ten pounds. A triangular bayonet could be fixed to the underlug. It fired a cartridge containing one round ball and three buckshot. Grant recalled, 'The infantry under General Taylor was armed with flint-lock muskets, and paper cartridges charged with powder, buck-shot and ball. At the distance of a few hundred yards a man might fire at you all day without your finding out.'

The flintlock system was rather unreliable, especially in any sort of damp weather. In 1816 a system using a copper cap which would fire the cartridge was invented, which was dependable in any sort of weather.

In 1842 a new model musket, virtually identical to the Model 1835 musket, but using this new percussion system, was adopted by the army. One army officer's son recalled later 'the disgust of General Worth and other old army officers when the percussion guns and caps were first introduced . . . they feared that the caps would be lost and the men left helpless, forgetting that powder for

pouring in the pan of a flintlock gun was attended with greater risk of loss'. Manufacture of the 1835 flintlocks continued through 1848 and only a few regular companies received percussion weapons.

Actually, even the smoothbore 1842 muskets had been made obsolete by the Model 1841 U.S. rifle, generally called the 'Windsor' or 'Jager' rifle. This was a 0.54 calibre, percussion weapon, 49 inches long. It fired a paper cartridge holding 75 grains of powder and a pre-patched spherical lead ball. It had an adjustable rear sight and was accurate at well over 500 yards. The bayonet was a 22.5-inch - long sabre bayonet with a brass hilt.

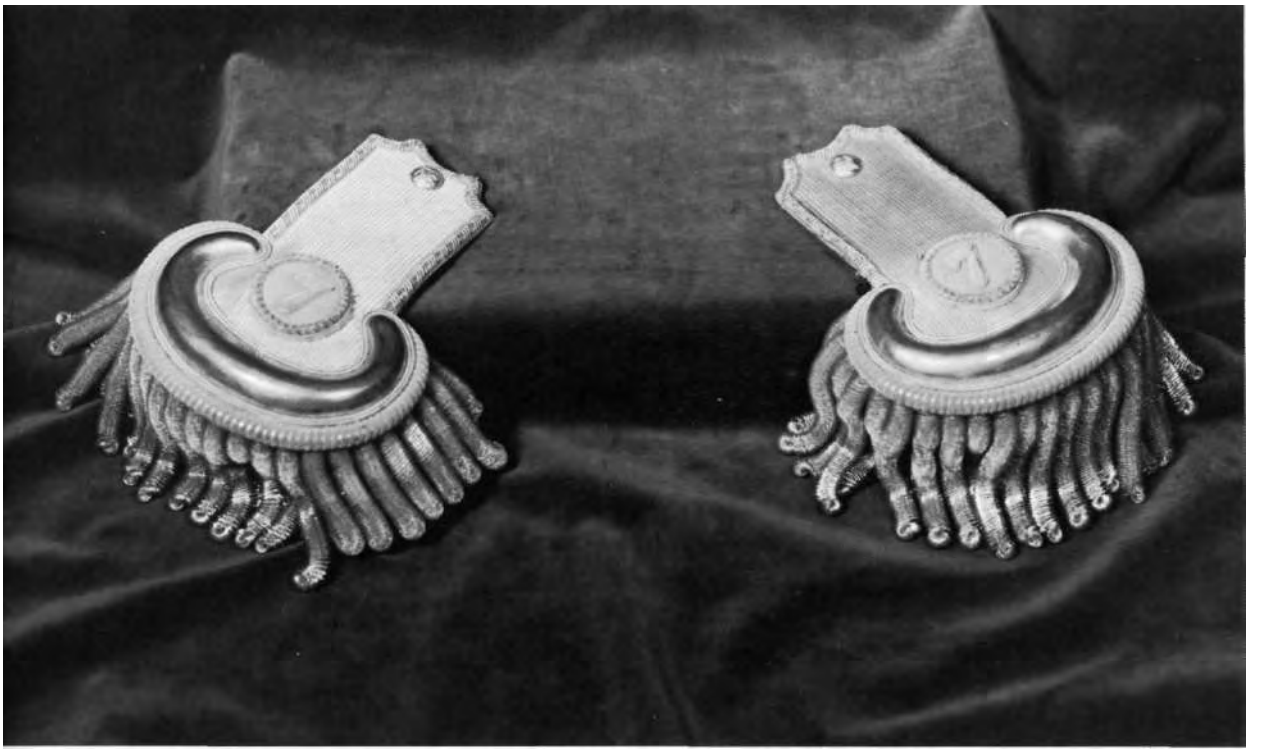
Members of the few regular companies with percussion weapons carried their copper caps in special 'cap pockets' inserted in the lower right-hand side of their jackets. These were made with pocket flaps. Flintlock users wore a brass pick and brush from a jacket button.

Officers were armed only with their Model 1840 swords, brass-hilted and worn in black leather scabbards with gilt mountings. These were carried on whitened buff leather crossbelts with silver rectangular belt plates on their centres. In the field most officers supplied themselves with plain dragoon sabres which they carried on black leather waistbelts with brass rectangular beltplates.

Besides the regular infantry regiments, a new type of unit, the Regiment of Voltigeurs and Foot Riflemen, was authorized on 11 February 1847. According to a contemporary newspaper, the unit could 'move about with the celerity of cavalry. In fact they form a little army of themselves, of dragoons, infantry and artillery.' Actually, however, the regiment served the same as the other infantry regiments.

Originally the Voltigeurs were to wear dark grey uniforms of the same cut as the sky blue ones. On 8 January 1848, however, its commander wrote that officially:

The Uniform of the Regiment should be changed to the color it has so far worn [except the officers] i.e. *'dark blue'* with trimmings, buttons, straps, etc., as at present. The color of the cloth prescribed for the Regiment was 'dark grey', but none of that color has ever been received by the Regt. The original uniform furnished to the non-commis. officers & men was *necessarily* Infantry clothing, none else being on hand.



Epaulettes worn by Major R. C. Gatlin, 7th U.S. Infantry. (North Carolina Museum of History)

Colonel's shoulder strap worn by Captain James Duncan after being breveted colonel. (West Point Museum Collections)

The Artillery

Another force which served mostly as infantry, rather than in its special role, was the artillery. At the war's beginning only four companies, one from each artillery regiment, were equipped as light or horse artillerymen. In these companies everyone, from commander to cannoneer, rode—giving them great mobility and striking power. The companies were Company K, 1st Artillery (Taylor's); Company A, 2nd Artillery (Duncan's); Company C, 3rd Artillery (Ringgold's), and Company D, 4th Artillery (Washington's).

On 3 March 1847 one additional company per regiment was authorized to become light. Only three such companies managed to get so equipped. They were Company I, 1st Artillery (Magruder's); Company E, 3rd Artillery (Bragg's), and Company G, 4th artillery (Drum's).

The rest of the artillery served as infantry—and served well as that. Kenly wrote at Monterey that 'the artillery battalion especially attracted my attention; the red-legged infantry [as they were called from the broad red stripe running down the seams of their blue pantaloons] never went on dress parade appeared to better advantage', [i.e. looked smarter]

Artillery dress and fatigue uniforms were the same as for infantry, with red horsehair plumes in the shakos, red piping and turnbacks. Trim on jackets was yellow, as were buttons and epaulettes, although silver buttons were also used. Brass cannon, crossed, made up the shako badge.

Short Model 1834 two-edged thrusting swords with all-brass hilts were issued to foot artillerymen. These were carried in black leather scabbards worn on white buff leather belts buckled with two-piece brass buckles. Horse artillerymen wore long, curved sabres from their belts, made with a single brass guard and a leather-wrapped grip. Their scabbards were shiny iron, and their belts were whitened buff.

Light artillerymen had only slightly different fatigue uniforms from foot artillerymen. They wore the standard yellow-trimmed sky blue jacket but their trousers had a three-quarter-inch-wide red stripe down each leg, with two stripes worn by officers and sergeants. From James Walker's paintings, it would appear they often wore red bands on their forage caps.

Ringgold's horse company, the only one in the army, had a totally different uniform. His men wore dark blue jackets trimmed with red worsted wool tape. Their sky blue trousers ended up in knee-length boots. Captain Randolph Ridgely, who commanded the company after Ringgold's death, wrote on 3 July 1846 that 'the company at the present time is much in want of clothing, and as the clothing allowed horse artillery is different to any worn by other corps, there can not be any obtained except from the Clothing Bureau'.

In horse artillery, everyone has his own horse, while light artillerymen rode the limber chests. Both could be rushed from point to point on the field where needed. In virtually every battle of the war mobile American artillery silenced Mexican guns and broke up Mexican formations before they had a chance to close with American infantry.

Their guns were usually six-pounders, bronze smoothbores which they kept highly polished. These had an effective range longer than Mexican infantry muskets, which meant artillerymen could unlimber and go into action without facing too much enemy small arms fire. The cannon fired solid shot, spherical case and canister.

The Cavalry

The army's other mounted force was its two regiments of dragoons. Both regiments had ten

companies, usually posted so far apart they rarely saw each other.

Dragoon dress uniforms included officers' shakos, 'of the same material as that for the Infantry, but according to a [different] pattern furnished; to be ornamented with a gilt star, silver eagle, and gold cord; the star to be worn in front, with a drooping white horsehair pompon; the Field Officers to have a small strip of red hair, to show in front of their pompons'. Other ranks had a 'Cap—Same material as for the other Corps, but the pattern, ornaments and trimmings, like the one furnished by the Clothing Bureau. Drooping white horsehair pompon.' A letter to a prospective supplier described the shakos:

The tops of the uniform caps are of pretty stout jacked leather made to fit . . . precisely. They extend down the bodies of the caps one inch and are neatly stitched to the lower edge . . . The Dragoon cap is level on top, the poke . . . is *patent* leather. The bodies . . . are made of imported materials, so said, from South America, and coney fur or wool is the principal thereof. There is a strap of *patent* leather with a slide . . ., so fixed as to be brought under the chin to secure the cap to the head.

Coats were dark blue, trimmed on the collar, cuffs and short tails with yellow, and small yellow turnbacks. Two rows of brass buttons were worn. Light yellow 'gorget flashes' were worn on other ranks' collars, while gold lace almost hid the officers' yellow collars.

Gold and yellow worsted epaulettes were worn by all ranks, using the infantry system of rank identification. Cuffs were marked by the same system, too. Officers' orange silk sashes were knotted on the right sides, as were sergeants' worsted ones. Non-commissioned officers wore yellow chevrons, pointed down, not up. Trousers were sky-blue, with yellow stripes for corporals and privates and two yellow stripes on each leg for officers and sergeants.

In the field the same trousers were worn, along with the same dark blue forage caps. Contemporary illustrations usually show these with

'Moving up to battle', by James Walker. (West Point Museum Collections, United States Military Academy)

Fatigue cap worn by Captain James Duncan, commanding Co. A, 2nd U.S. Artillery. Officers' caps do not seem to have been made with ear flaps. (West Point Museum Collections, United States Military Academy)

yellow bands and no ear flaps. Chamberlain mentions escaping from some irregulars and seeing some horsemen in the distance wearing 'the orange bands of the 2nd Dragoons'. At the same time, his drawings generally do not show such bands, but only a single brass letter worn on the front of an all-blue cap. Such decorations appear to be a matter of the commander's wishes.

Fatigue jackets were short, tail-less and made of dark blue wool. They were trimmed with yellow worsted tape on the collar, around the shoulder straps, on the cuffs and on the bottom and back seams. Such jackets were regulation, however. Chamberlain reported seeing both artillerymen and men of both dragoon regiments in 1848 'dressed in bright red flannel shirts and black broad brim felt hats; this, with their white belts, burnished arms, gay banners, and dashing horsewomen galloping up and down our flanks made an effect seldom witnessed in the dull routine of Uncle Sam's service'.

Dragoons wore a wide, whitened buff leather waistbelt with a brass buckle bearing the letter 'D' from which the Model 1840, brass-hilted heavy cavalry sabre hung in a shiny iron scabbard by two white straps. The sabre was supported by a strap of whitened buff leather, running from the right shoulder to the left side, much as the Sam Browne belt, although adopted fifteen years earlier. Officers wore black patent leather belts.

Another white belt, rather wider, was suspended from the left shoulder to the right hip with a large brass buckle worn over the square of the back. A large iron clip attached to this held the dragoon's carbine, either the Model 1847 musketoon, little more than a cut-down musket, or the 1843 Hall carbine.

The Hall carbine had been accepted for service in 1819. It was a 0.52 calibre, breechloading, percussion carbine, made with its breech hinged so that a spring clip, when released, tipped it up. Powder and ball were inserted, the breechblock shut, the weapon cocked and capped, and then it could be fired like any other percussion weapon. A slight gap between breechblock and barrel meant a certain discharge of gas and flame in front of the firer's face, but not close enough to do any damage. Mostly because of this unnerving flame, the carbine was never as popular as a breechloader could have been.

Dragoons carried one or two pistols, too. These were single-shot, muzzle-loading weapons, made both as flintlocks and percussion weapons. The Model 1842 percussion is claimed to have been the best martial pistol of its time, but its time was already virtually past. Texas Rangers, officers and those able to procure their own pistols were buying Colt revolvers, especially the heavy 0.44 'Walker' Colts.

Another horse unit was the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen, authorized on 19 May 1846. It lost its horses on landing in Mexico and served on foot, although Companies C and I were mounted on captured horses by May 1847.

According to General Orders of 4 June 1846:

The 'Undress' of the United States 'Regiment of Mounted Riflemen' shall, for the present, be the same as that for the Dragoons—except

1st. That the button and waist-belt plate shall bear the letter 'R' instead of the letter 'D'.

2nd. The trousers of dark blue cloth with a stripe of black cloth down the outer seam edged with yellow cord.

3rd. The forage cap to be ornamented with a gold embroidered spread Eagle with the letter 'R' in silver on the shield.

4th. The sash to be crimson silk.

5th. Wings for coat, according to pattern. (to be provided)

The 'undress' will be the only uniform required to be worn by the regiment until further orders.

The unit was armed with the Model 1841 rifle and an early unit historian wrote, 'The rifle being

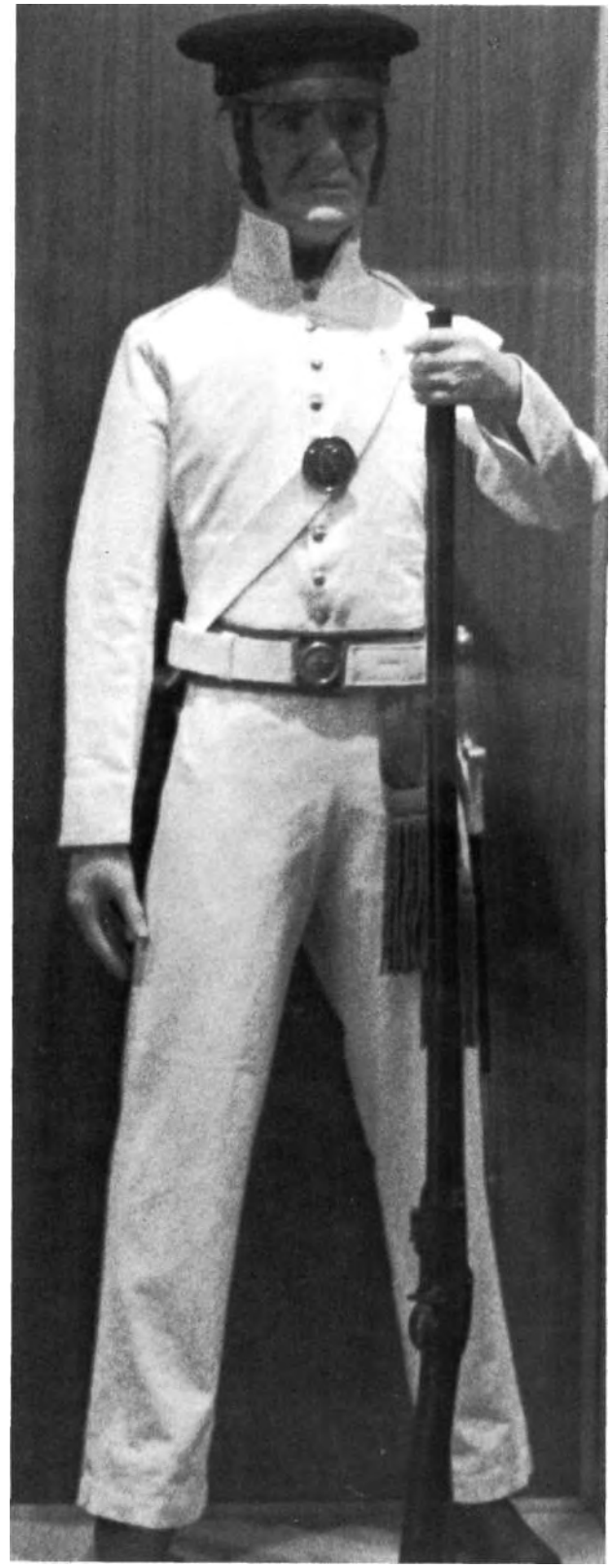
clumsy to handle mounted, necessitated firing one round and then riding the enemy down with the sabre—a custom that soon infused the officers and the men with the conviction that they were irresistible'. The unit also received 608 flintlock pistols.

The Specialists

Another newly-raised unit was the Company of Sappers, Miners and Pontoniers. The unit's second commander, Lieutenant G. W. Smith, recalled, 'Soon after the hostilities with Mexico broke out. . . an act was passed, providing for the enlistment of an engineer company of one hundred men, to be composed of ten sergeants, ten corporals, thirty-nine artificers, thirty-nine second-class privates, and two musicians; all with higher pay than that of the enlisted men in the line of the army'. Smith was happy to note that '. . . with two exceptions, the enlisted men of the engineer company were native born, and all but four of them were raw recruits. Each of these four had served with credit during one or more terms of enlistment in the regular army. Three of them were promptly made sergeants, and the fourth was a musician (bugler).'

The unit had infantry-type shakos, with a brass castle badge. Their spherical pompons were black worsted, three inches in diameter. Their coats were dark blue with black collars and cuffs. Each collar had a single yellow tape false buttonhole but no other trim. Cuffs had yellow trimmed buttonholes, according to rank. Sergeants had two yellow silk epaulettes, 'corresponding in pattern with those of a Captain'. Corporals had two worsted epaulettes 'of the pattern of subalterns', and privates had fringeless epaulettes. The coat's turnbacks were dark blue and it had 'a small pocket covered by a flap on the right side for carrying percussion caps'. Buttons were brass.

Officers wore standard Corps of Engineers uniforms, basically the same as the other ranks'. A gold embroidered wreath and star was on their black collars, and their cuff buttonholes were embroidered according to rank. Their epaulettes, made according to the standard rank system, were gold and had 'a turreted castle of silver' within their crescents. Their hats were fore-and-aft hats, 'same



Artillery N.C.O. cotton duck summer fatigue uniform. (Smithsonian Institution)

Sword carried by foot artillerymen. (Smithsonian Institution)

as for General Officers, except that the corners to be four and a half inches long, instead of six'. The loop was to be 'plain gold strap, two inches long, raised embroidered edges: ornamented with gilt spread eagle and scroll'. On top were three black ostrich feathers.

Other ranks wore sky blue trousers, with wide black stripes for non-commissioned officers and narrow ones for privates. Officers wore dark blue trousers with a wide black stripe on each leg.

For fatigue the men wore dark blue jackets, patterned after artillery ones, and white cotton jackets. Trousers were either 'light blue mixture' or white. They were also allowed to wear 'canvas overalls, to be drawn over the trousers'.

For weapons, officers carried straight, brass-hilted swords on black swordbelts embroidered with gold worn around the waist. Other ranks carried percussion musketoons with brass-hilted sabre bayonets.

The Corps of Topographical Engineers had been formed as an independent corps for exploration and mapping in 1838. They differed, in dress, from the other Engineers by their dark blue velvet facings, heavily embroidered with gold. Their dark blue trousers had gold embroidered stripes down each leg.

Both types of officers usually served on staffs, where they were two of nine different staff departments. Besides them were those of the Adjutant-General, Inspector-General, Quartermaster, Sustenance, Ordnance, Medical and Pay Departments. At the war's beginning, the army had three general officers, 259 officers and seventeen military storekeepers in the various staff departments.

According to Grant, these officers:

Were appointed from the line of the army, and did not vacate their regimental commissions until their regimental and staff commissions were for the same grades. Generally lieutenants were appointed to captaincies to fill vacancies in the staff corps. If they should reach a captaincy in the line before they arrived at a majority in the staff, they would elect which commission they would retain. In the 4th Infantry, in 1844, at least six line officers were on duty in the staff, and therefore permanently detached from the regiment.

Staff officers wore their regimental dress, with 'twisted gold and silver cord' aiguillettes from their right arm to a front button. In addition, they wore fore-and-aft hats like generals' with a gilt eagle instead of the generals' silver eagles. Plumes were worn, 'with the distinction of colors to designate the Departments of the Staff. Quartermaster officers had sky blue plumes and Ordnance officers red. Pay and Medical officers had no plumes.

Pay and Medical officers were usually treated the same, with the same uniform of dark blue trousers with black stripes and black velvet facings worn only by surgeons, although both had gold embroidery on collars and cuffs. Both could only command juniors in their own departments.

Over them all were the generals. They wore hats which were: cocked, without binding; fan or back part eleven inches; the front or cock nine inches; each corner, six inches; black ribbons on the two front sides . . . black silk cockade, six inches

Fatigue jacket worn by Captain James Duncan, Co. A., 2nd U.S. Artillery. Piping is red and the buttons are plain. (West Point Museum Collections, United States Military Academy)

diameter; loop gold 11 inches long, ornamented with a spread silver eagle; gold rays emanating from the eagle $1^1/_2$ inches computing from the center, terminating in 24 silver stars, plain or set with brilliants. The commander-in-chief, a major-general, wore 'yellow swan feathers, from an upright stem, feathered to the length of eight inches'. Other major-generals had plumes of 'the same shape and materials, except that it will be black and white equally divided, the black below'. Brigadier-generals were to have 'red and white, the white below'. The hats had a gold tassel at each end.

Generals' coats were dark blue, with two rows of brass buttons. Collars were plain buff, as were cuffs. Trousers were dark blue with a buff stripe down each leg. On each shoulder was a gold epaulette with half-inch bullions, $3^1/_2$ inches long. On the ones belonging to the Commander-in-chief were three stars, $1^1/_8$, $1^1/4$ and $1^1/_2$ inches across with the largest star in the crescent. Major-generals had two such stars, and brigadier-generals one.

Generals were the only officers allowed buff sashes. Colonel Bennet Riley, leading a charge at Contreras, called out that in this charge he'd win either 'a yellow sash or six feet of Mexican earth!' Generals had gold and red leather striped belts, with circular, two-piece beltplates with the letters 'US' in the centre. Plain black belts were worn in the field.

And the army they led was, in Grant's words, about the most 'efficient army for its number and armament . . . [that] ever fought a battle'.

The Mexican army expected to win a war with the Americans. It was four times larger than the Americans' and had been tried in a decade of fighting. A *London Times* correspondent in 1845 reported that Mexican soldiers 'are superior to those of the United States'.

To anyone seriously examining all aspects of the struggle, however, the odds would appear to have been against the Mexicans. There were no facilities in operation for producing arms, and less uniform-producing facilities than in America. The pop-

Dress cap worn by Artillery Lieutenant D. E. Hale. The red plume is missing. (West Point Museum Collections, United States Military Academy)

ulation in 1846 was about 7,250,000 compared to the 20,300,000 living in the United States.

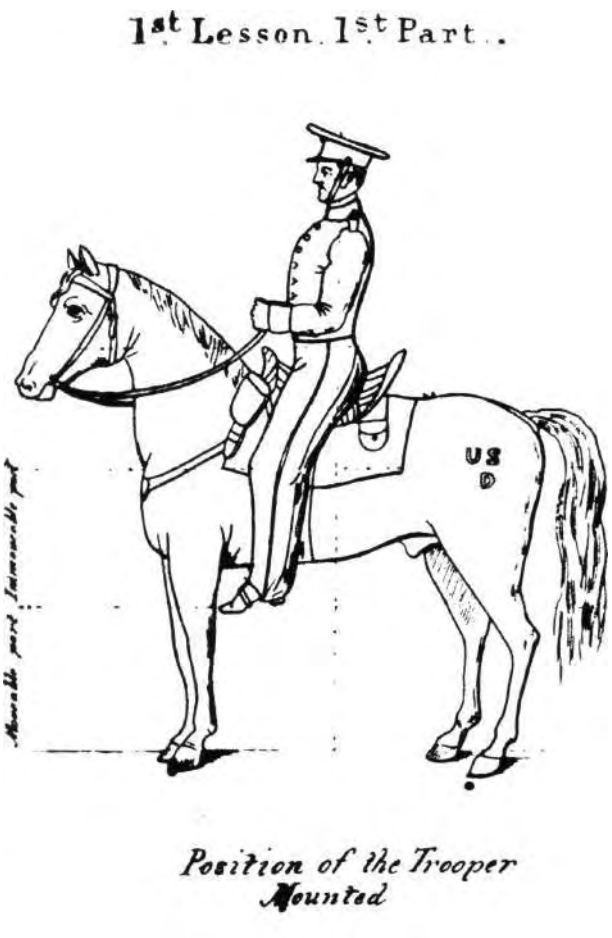
The population was governed, too, by a rather unstable government. On 4 January 1846 Paredes became president, to be replaced by President Bravo on 28 July 1846. Bravo was replaced on 5 August by President Salas, who was removed from office that Christmas by President Farias. Farias was replaced by the self styled 'Napoleon of the West', Santa Anna, on 22 March 1847. Santa Anna lasted until 1 April when Anaya was named president. Anaya lasted until 20 May, when Santa Anna returned to remain president until 20 September. President Peňa y Peňa became temporary president until Anaya could take the position on 14 November.

The army was usually involved in these rapid changes in government, some units siding with one party and some with another. These sort of activities tended to make discipline a bit lax. It was a bit lax by some standards anyway. It was not until 1847 that soldiers were ordered, 'in the presence of a superior, if he is not under arms or in formation, the soldier stands with his hand at the shako or his hat removed; in the street, he brings the right hand to the shield of the shako . . .' Before that salutes were rendered only by presenting arms in formation.

It is a matter of opinion if officers deserved salutes, anyway. A regular U.S. officer wrote that they 'are generally young men of corrupt morals, dissipated habits, and with little courage or enterprise . . . they never LEAD their men'. Grant was rather kinder. 'The Mexicans . . . stood up as well as any troops ever did. The trouble seemed to be the lack of experience among the officers, which led them after a certain time to simply quit, without being particularly whipped, but because they had fought enough.' The British Minister wrote home in April 1846, 'The Officers . . Corps, the worst perhaps to be found in any part of the world. They are totally ignorant of their duty.'

Most officers were in the army for its social and political value. Just before the war there were 24,000 officers, most on half pay or detached service, and 20,000 other ranks.

'A siege gun under fire', by James Walker. (West Point Museum Collections, United States Military Academy)



A dragoon, shown in the official copy of *Cavalry Tactics*, published in 1841. Note the brand on the horse.

The other ranks of the Mexican Army were filled by conscription. Lots were drawn on the last Sunday of every October, with those chosen to enter the army on 15 December for six years. All single men or childless widowers from eighteen to forty, married men not living with their wives and childless married men at least sixty Mexican inches tall were subject to conscription. A long list of exemptions, however, limited the list. These included men engaged to be married, chaplaincy aspirants, attorneys with offices, and many other categories. For anyone with a bit of money, conscription was easy to avoid.

Those who ended up serving were usually the poor, the peons who worked the land. Few educated or upper class men saw service in the other ranks. The result, wrote Grant, was that 'the Mexican army of that day was hardly an organization. The private soldier was picked up from the lower class of the inhabitants when wanted; his consent was not asked; he was poorly clothed, worse fed, and seldom paid. He was turned adrift when no longer wanted. With all this I have seen as brave stands made by some of these men as I have ever seen made by soldiers.'

Indeed, many of their actions would honour the best of picked troops. Captain McCall, 4th U.S. Infantry, was impressed by two Mexican infantry regiments which stood under fire at Resaca de la Palma until 'almost annihilated; one regiment retiring from the field with but twenty-five men'.

The stand of the San Blas Battalion at Chapultepec—its colonel hit fourteen times but managing to save the battalion colour by wrapping it about his body before dying, while only one officer and a handful of soldiers, all wounded, managed to escape—is often overlooked because of the famous story of the stand of the teenage Military Academy cadets at the same battle. Six of them, one only thirteen, died defending their colours there.

The Academy provided not only the war's most famous story, but also the army's best officers. Cadets there studied for three years. There were only 100 cadets, divided into a cadet company and a sub-lieutenant company. These were headed by an infantry and a cavalry captain as first and second in command. Each company was divided into squads of eight each, under a cadet corporal, while two squads were headed by a cadet sergeant.

Cadets wore a dark blue tailcoat with sky blue collar and cuffs, plain sky blue trousers and a brass-trimmed shako for dress. Cadet sub-lieutenants had a gold epaulette on their left shoulder and a fore-and-aft hat. Cadet sergeants wore a crimson silk epaulette on their right shoulder, and cadet corporals wore a crimson half-inch-wide linen stripe from their cuffs to their elbows on both arms.

When in academy grounds, cadets wore dark blue round jackets with short blue barracks caps decorated by deep red cords and small tassels. Buttons and metal trimmings were brass.

The Infantry

Such uniforms were fairly easy to supply to a small, elite corps such as the cadets, but they were difficult to supply to the whole army. The complaints of

Dragoon Lieutenant B. W. Armstrong, ca. 1848, in dress coat and forage cap. (National Archives)

General Giriaco Vazquez, from Jalapa, in 1842, were typical of the army during the entire war. On 15 February he wrote:

The greater part of the rank-and-file of the 2nd Active Battalion, 7th Regular Regiment, are short of overcoats, blankets or any heavier garment that could serve them as cover on rainy and cold nights or when asleep in their quarters, it being necessary for them to go to sleep dressed, with the result that the only uniform issue they possess is quickly destroyed. To avoid this damage and provide them with an indispensable item that will make their service more bearable . . . have the kindness to inform His Excellency the President about the great necessity of providing them at least with one coarse frieze blanket each.

On 7 May and again on 10 May Vazquez received canvas uniforms for his troops, including a shirt, jacket, stock, trousers, and barracks caps, and was told it was impossible to obtain the regulation one wool and two canvas uniforms.

Probably typical of what a unit received in the field is the issue given to the Volunteers of Saint Patrick in 1848. The unit drew 200 wool jackets, 210 pairs of trousers, 400 linen shirts, 200 black stocks, 200 blankets, 200 barracks caps, 232 pairs of shoes, 100 pairs of underpants, and 19 sets of straps for carrying overcoats.

Santa Anna's troops at Angostura carried only one uniform, a change of underclothing made of heavy duty canvas, two shirts, ammunition and cooking utensils.

Even those without full uniform could still wear proper badges. Men who had lost limbs in defence of national independence wore a sky blue shield surrounded by an embroidered laurel wreath in gold for officers and yellow for other ranks. The man's name and battle in which he was wounded was embroidered on the shield.

Officers' badges were less elaborate. A colonel wore two heavy bullion fringed epaulettes, gold for foot troops and silver for mounted ones, with a large star of the opposite metal in each crescent. The lieutenant-colonel wore the same but plain. Both wore scarlet sashes around their waists.

Captains wore two plain gold or silver epaulettes. Lieutenants and second-adjutants wore one epaulette on their right shoulders. Sub-lieutenants, sub-adjutants and ensigns wore one on their left shoulders.

First sergeants and cornet majors had two silk epaulettes, green for mounted men and crimson for foot. Second sergeants wore one such epaulette on their right shoulders. Corporals had a half-inch-wide linen strip sewn from the inner seam of both cuffs to the outer seams near their elbows of red or green. In addition, corporals carried crude wooden sticks, with which they used to beat privates at their whim. Because this was basically an insult, corporals in the Military Academy or the Invalid Corps were not allowed such sticks.

At the same time, ornaments like earrings, rings or other jewellery that 'lower the military profession' were strictly forbidden. Offenders could be sent to gaol for a month for the first offence alone.

There was enough shine on all the brass on the musket, shako and buttons to satisfy the gaudiest infantryman.

Initially there were twelve line infantry regiments, three light regiments and nine active militia infantry regiments. A 4th Light Infantry Battalion was authorized on 30 March 1846. In December 1847 the units were all made into line regiments numbered 1 to 20, and many of these were stood down on 31 December 1848.

Each infantry regiment consisted of two battalions of eight companies each. It had a colonel, a lieutenant-colonel, a commandant, two second adjutants, two lieutenants, two ensign-sub-lieutenants, two surgeons, two chaplains, a drum major, a bugle corporal, two pioneer corporals with sixteen pioneers and two armourers. There were also a second sergeant as a tailor and corporals as a blacksmith, mason and baker.

A battalion had a rifle, a grenadier and six fusilier companies. Each company consisted of a captain, a lieutenant, two sub-lieutenants, a first and four second sergeants, nine corporals and eighty privates. The fusilier and grenadier companies had a drummer, a bugler and a fifer, while the riflemen had four buglers.

Accoutrements consisted of a canvas or leather knapsack and a plain wood water-bottle, made like a small keg and holding about a quart. Bayonets were carried in black leather scabbards held in white crossbelts which made one part of a white 'X' across their chests. An oval brass plate was worn in the centre of the 'X' on the white cartridge box belt. Cartridge boxes, of black leather, seem to have been of British pattern.

U.S. dragoon dress shako. (Smithsonian Institution)

Fusiliers and grenadiers carried India-pattern Brown Bess muskets, made in Great Britain. These were walnut-stocked, smoothbore, flintlock muskets with brass furniture and a browned 39-inch-long barrel. They fired a 0.75 calibre ball. Powder was locally made and of poor quality. To make up for the quality, extra powder was added to each cartridge, resulting in quite a kick when the musket was fired. As a result, the soldier usually flinched, if he simply didn't fire 'from the hip', as was common, and marksmanship was noticeably poor. Upton, at Palo Alto, noted, 'Though they loaded and fired very fast, they did not take good aim, or they would have killed every man of us.'

Riflemen were supplied with British Baker rifles, a weapon similar to the Brown Bess, but with a rifled bore, a pistol grip, sights and a brass patch box in the stock used to store tools and spare flints. It, too, was a flintlock weapon, with a 0.625 bore and accurate to several hundred yards. It took a brass-hilted sabre bayonet.

Infantrymen also carried brass-hilted short sabres, with slightly curved blades next to their triangular iron bayonets. Musicians had sabres of their own design. These had deep red sword knots. Similar red sword knots, quite plain, were worn on the officers' swords. Their swords were their only weapons, and had long straight blades with elaborate brass hilts. Officers carried their swords on waistbelts worn under their coats in the field, and from crossbelts when in garrison.

Senior officers also carried canes adorned by silk cords. In the field many officers seem to have worn gilt gorgets, mostly with a silver coat of arms in the centre.

Detailed regulations on uniforms were first issued on 10 July 1839. These were revoked and new uniforms ordered on 31 August 1840. However, on 22 December 1841 the 1839 regulations were again declared in force, save for minor changes. These seem to have been the regulations followed during the war. On 30 March 1846 the San Blas Battalion was re-designated the 3rd Line Regiment and orders making that change stated that, 'Its uniform shall be the one prescribed by law of July 1st 1839.'

According to these regulations (and later changes), the 1st Regiment had yellow lapels and piping, deep red collars, cuffs and turnbacks and blue or white waistcoats. The 2nd Regiment had deep red lapels and turnbacks, and cuffs and similar coloured piping on trousers. Its collars were sky blue. The 3rd Regiment had crimson lapels, cuffs and turnbacks, with sky blue collars and piping. The 4th Regiment had deep red lapels and turnbacks, sky blue collars and cuffs and white piping. The 5th Regiment had deep red collars and turnbacks with sky blue cuffs and piping.

The 6th Regiment had white lapels, crimson collars, cuffs and turnbacks, with piping in opposite colours. The 7th Regiment had yellow embroidered buttonholes instead of lapels, green collars and cuffs, and crimson turnbacks and piping. The 8th Regiment had sky blue lapels and turnbacks, deep red collars and cuffs and piping in opposite colours. The 9th Regiment had purple lapels and cuffs, buff collars and turnbacks and piping of opposite colours. The 10th Regiment had purple lapels and cuffs, deep red collars and turnbacks, and buff piping.

According to orders of 22 December 1843, the 11th Regiment had white coats with sky blue lapels, collars and cuffs, deep red turnbacks and piping of opposite colours. Its trousers, as of 30 June 1842, were crimson. The 12th Regiment had buff lapels,

1 Private, 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment
2 Sergeant, 6th U.S. Infantry Regiment
3 Private, 3rd Line Regiment of Mexico

1 Private, 1st Cavalry Regiment of Mexico
2 Irregular Mexican Lancer
3 Corporal, 2nd U.S. Dragoon Regiment

B

G. A. EMBLETON

1 Captain, 2nd U.S. Artillery
2 Private, Company A, 2nd U.S. Artillery
3 Sub-lieutenant, Mexican Foot Artillery

D

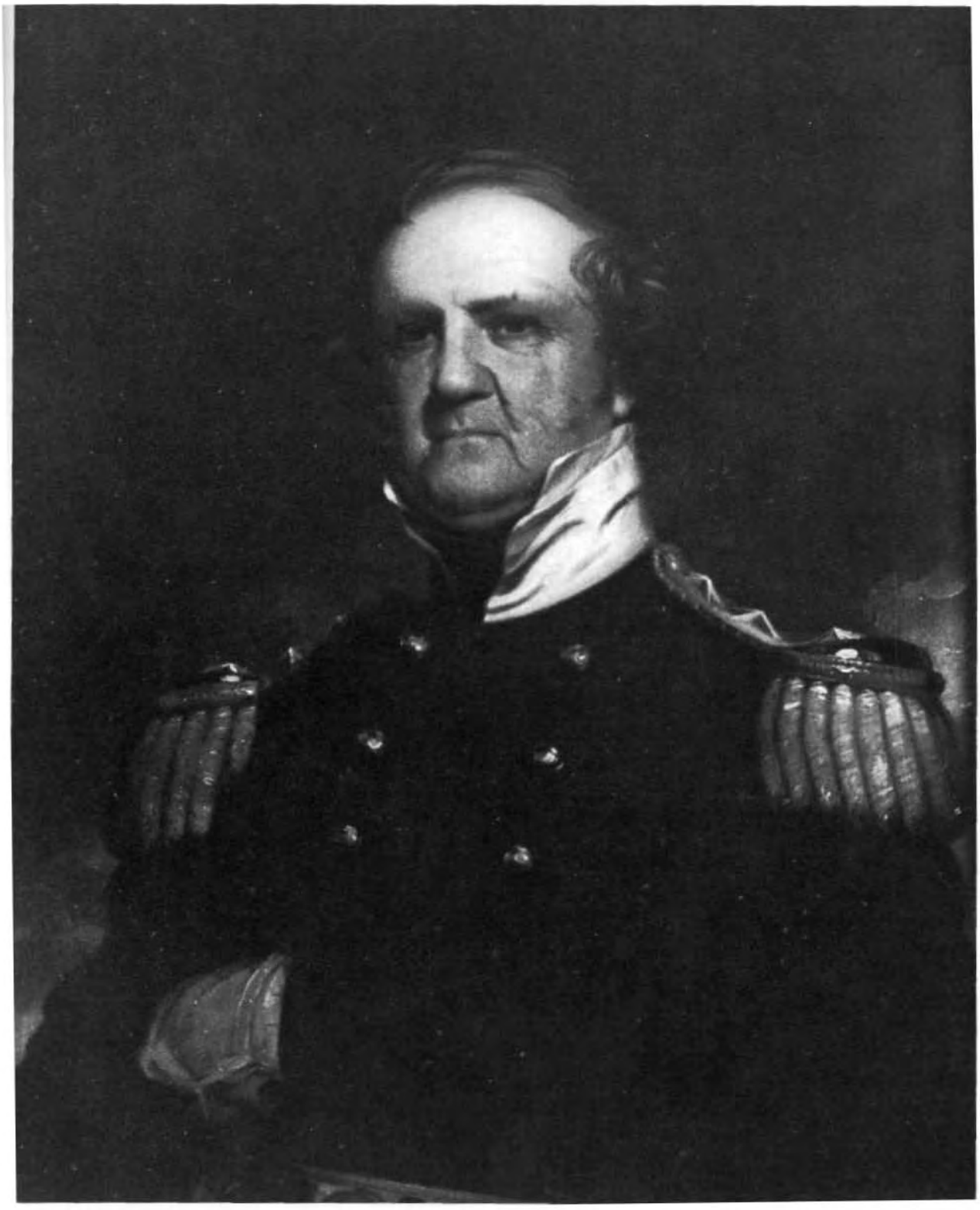
G. A EMBLETON

1 Private, 7th New York Regiment
2 Texas Ranger
3 Private, Grenadier Guards of the Supreme Power

1 Private, Mexican Spy Company
2 Private, Company A, 2nd Illinois
3 Officer, Tulancingo Cuirassiers

1 Lieutenant-Colonel, Mexican Engineer Corps
2 Sergeant, U.S. Company of Sappers, Miners and Pontoniers
3 Field Officer, U.S. Corps of Engineers

1 Mexican Division-General, Gala dress
2 Private, Mexican Military Medical Corps
3 U.S. Major-General, full dress



Major-General Winfield Scott, by Robert W. Weir. (West Point Museum Collections, United States Military Academy)

cuffs and collars, deep red turnbacks and piping of opposite colours.

All coats and trousers, unless ordered differently, were dark blue. Coats were cut square at the waist in front, with long tails. In the summer, troops wore plain white canvas trousers. White gaiters are shown worn under trousers and over shoes in some contemporary prints, although not listed in regulations, contracts or inventories.

Shakos were worn by all ranks and came in a variety of styles. Generally, they were eight to nine inches tall, made of dull black leather, with a band at the crown. The cockade loop, chinstrap and shield with the national coat of arms and regimental number were brass. There was a three-inch-diameter tricolour cockade worn above the shield, on top of which was a crimson pompon. Top bands were of yellow, reddish or black tape and cockade loops were sometimes made of dark or light cord, both with metallic threads woven into them.

In the field soldiers mostly wore barracks caps. There were at least four basic types of barracks caps, the most common one being a two-sided blue cap, worn fore-and-aft, with a red tassel hanging down in front. These were usually piped red. A similar style was worn without the tassel and simply a red band around the bottom. Officers often wore blue copies of the French kepi, trimmed with red. A grey cap, like the U.S. forage cap, with leather visor and red band was often worn by the light infantry.

The first three light infantry regiments seem to have worn uniforms according to the 1840 regulations. They had dark blue coats with deep red facings. The initial 'L', for *ligero* (light) was embroidered on the right collar, and 'P' for *permanente* (permanent) on the left. Their shakos were smaller than other infantry ones, and had a green pompon and brass bugle on their fronts. Crossbelts were black and had no crossbelt plate. In the field they wore grey short jackets, trimmed red and plain grey trousers.

Although there seems to have been no regimental distinction between the first three light regiments, the 4th Light Infantry received a unique uniform. It had a dark blue coat with green collar, piping and arabesques, crimson lapels, cuffs and turnbacks, with eagle decorations on the turnbacks. Trousers were medium blue with crimson piping down each leg.

Model 1842 issue percussion pistol. (North Carolina Museum of History)

The active militia regiments had been in the field so long there was virtually no difference between them and the regulars. They were ordered in early 1842 to wear dark blue coats with red collars, cuffs, turnbacks and lapels with yellow piping. Brass buttons had the unit designation stamped on them. The coat had tri-pointed false pocket flaps with a button at each point's end, while on each turnback were two yellow quivers with three arrows in each, two inches long. Trousers were sky blue with red piping, and the regular infantry shako was to be worn. The First Active Regiment of Mexico, however, had yellow lapels and piping, with deep red collars, cuffs and turnbacks and blue or white waistcoats.

On 7 December 1841 the Grenadier Guards of the Supreme Powers was authorized. During the war the unit had deep red coats with sky blue collars, cuffs and turnbacks, white piping and white lapels with eight yellow tape-trimmed buttonholes on each one. There were two yellow flashes on each cuff and a yellow fringeless epaulette on each shoulder. Pocket flaps were vertical with three tassels and a grenade was embroidered on each coat-tail. Trousers were sky blue with yellow piping. The Guards had patent leather accoutrements and wore twenty-inch-tall bearskin caps with brass frontplates.

The Veteran Infantry Coastguard companies were raised to guard harbours. They had blue coats with deep red collars, cuffs, turnbacks and piping, dark blue arabesques and the company initial embroidered on each collar. Trousers were white canvas and buttons were plain brass.

The Marine Infantry wore dark green coats with collars and cuffs of the same colour. A two-inch-tall yellow silk anchor was embroidered on each collar.

An original daguerreotype showing General Wool and his staff in the streets of Saltillo in 1847. A dragoon on the extreme right appears to have a coloured band on his forage cap. (Yale University Library)

The coats had crimson lapels, each with nine pointed tape-trimmed buttonholes. There was a yellow epaulette on each shoulder. Coat pockets were perpendicular with crimson piping and yellow tape trim. Each turnback had an embroidered anchor on it. On each cuff were yellow cuff bars, along with two strips of yellow tape around each cuff and three diagonal yellow flashes on each sleeve. Trousers were crimson, piped yellow.

The Regular Standing Battalion of Mexico wore lapel-less white coats. They had green cuffs, turnbacks and collars, with two-inch-tall unit initials embroidered in yellow on each collar. Piping was red and buttons were plain brass. Trousers were sky blue with a red stripe down each leg-

In the north, defence was made by the Presidial companies, of which there were eight in Texas, three in New Mexico and six in California. The Texas and New Mexico companies wore medium blue wool coats with deep red low collars and narrow cuffs. Their trousers were blue and they received blue wool capes for bad weather. Hats were black, broadbrimmed. Cartridge boxes were plain brown, and their bandoleers had the presidio name embroidered on them.

The California companies had a similar field uniform, only with grey, side-buttoned chaparral trousers worn over tall boots and round hats with white bands. In garrison they wore dark blue coats with green collars and cuffs, deep red lapels and turnbacks and white piping. Trousers were dark blue with red stripes and they had cavalry shakos.

There was also a Standing Battalion of the Californias, in dark blue coats with red collars, turnbacks and cuffs and piping in opposite colours. Collars were embroidered 'FC'. Trousers were dark blue with red piping. Infantry shakos were worn.

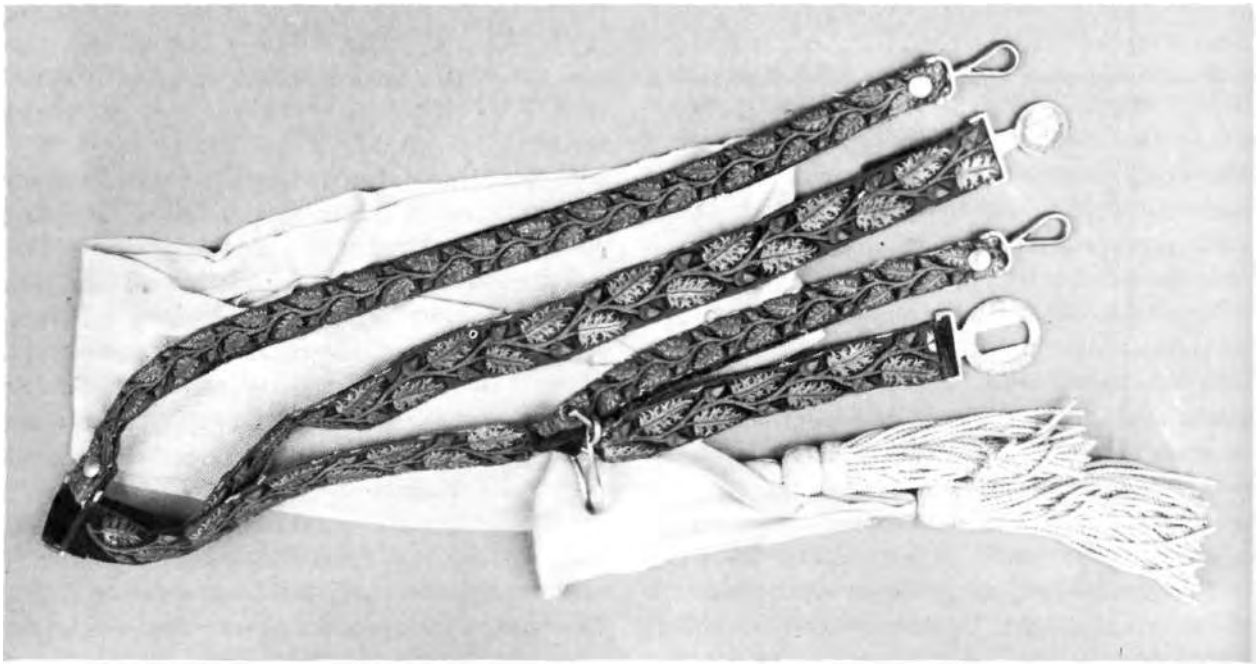
The Cavalry

Each cavalry regiment had four squadrons of two companies each. Each company had a captain, a lieutenant, two ensigns, a first and three second sergeants, nine corporals, two trumpeters, and fifty-two mounted and eight dismounted privates. The regiment consisted of a colonel, a lieutenant-colonel, two squadron commandants, four adjutant lieutenants, four guidonbearer ensigns, a chaplain, a surgeon, a first sergeant marshal, three grooms, a cornet major, a cornet corporal, two second sergeants (a saddler and an armourer), two corporals (a tailor and a carpenter), and three privates (a shoemaker, a mason and a baker).

The 1st Cavalry wore uniforms ordered on 7 September 1845. They consisted of short, dark green jackets with collars and cuffs of the same colour. Turnbacks, lapels and piping were yellow, and epaulettes, which were dark green with deep red fringe, were worn by all ranks. Helmets were black with brass visors, chinstraps and rims, with a horsehair tail and deep red plume on the left side. Trousers were grey with black seat linings, leather half-boots and red stripes. Saddleblankets were deep red, with a white band trim. Saddlerolls were green with deep red covers, a white band at each end and circular sides with the unit number on each side in white. In bad weather they wore dark blue capes with green collars.

The 1839 dress regulations put the 2nd Cavalry into yellow coats with sky blue lapels, collars, cuffs, turnbacks and piping. Trousers and saddleblankets were dark blue. The 3rd Cavalry wore dark blue coats with white lapels, green collars, cuffs and saddleblankets and piping in opposite colours. The 4th Cavalry had sky blue coats with deep red lapels, collars, cuffs and turnbacks with opposite coloured piping. Trousers were dark blue and saddle-blankets green.

The 5th Cavalry had dark blue trousers and coats with deep red lapels, collars, cuffs and turnbacks and piping in opposite colours. Saddle-blankets were deep red. The 6th Cavalry wore green trousers and coats with white lapels, collars



Swordbelt and buff sash worn by General Scott. The belt is embroidered with gold. (West Point Museum Collections, United States Military Academy)

and cuffs and deep red turnbacks and saddle-blankets.

On 10 September 1842 the 7th Cavalry was ordered into crimson coats with green collars, lapels, cuffs and turnbacks. Each lapel had eight white tape-trimmed buttonholes. Piping was in opposite colours. Trousers were green with crimson stripes. Saddleblankets were sky blue with white bands as trim. The 8th Cavalry wore dark blue trousers and coats with deep red lapels and cuffs and white collars and turnbacks. Their saddle-blankets were green. The 9th Cavalry received new dress regulations on 22 December 1841, giving them green coats with crimson lapels, collars, cuffs and turnbacks and white piping. Trousers were dark blue with crimson stripes and saddleblankets were green.

All six active militia cavalry regiments and the Light Mounted Regiment of Mexico wore sky blue coats with scarlet collars, cuffs, turnbacks and epaulettes. Trousers were dark blue with deep red stripes and leather half-boots. Cloaks were sky blue, as were saddleblankets, holster covers and saddle-rolls, which were also trimmed in dark blue bands. All cavalrymen wore trousers made with antelope-skin seat linings.

The Tulancingo Cuirassiers, authorized on 15 January 1842, had two uniforms. Dismounted, officers wore sky blue coats with crimson collars and cuffs and black fore-and-aft hats. Trousers were sky-blue with crimson stripes, worn under long, black, spurred boots. They had small silver cartridge boxes worn over a shoulder. The other ranks wore sky blue jackets with crimson collars, cuffs and turnbacks. Their trousers and boots were the same as the officers'.

When mounted, officers wore sky blue jackets with crimson collars and cuffs under a brass cuirass with a silver national coat of arms on the front. Their trousers were crimson, probably with sky blue stripes. Helmets were brass with silver ornaments. Saddleblankets were sky blue, edged in silver. Other ranks, when mounted, wore plain brass cuirasses and helmets with white metal ornaments. Their crimson trousers had sky blue stripes and sky blue saddleblankets edged in white. They all carried straight swords with brass grips especially designed for the unit.

The Jalisco Lancers were authorized on 19 July 1843. They wore deep red coats with dark green collars, cuffs and turnbacks and opposite coloured piping. Trousers were dark blue with red stripes. Their red caps were like Polish lancer caps, with yellow cords and a brass cap badge in front. Saddleblankets and holsters were green edged with white, while the saddleroll was green with a red cover.

On 20 September of the same year the Mounted Rifle Regiment was ordered into new uniforms of dark green jackets, piped white, with crimson cuffs, turnbacks and lapels with twelve buttons trimmed white for other ranks, silver for officers. It received fur busbys with brass shields and chinstraps. Trousers were grey with crimson stripes, worn over boots. Saddleblankets, holsters and saddlerolls were green, edged crimson.

The elite mounted unit, Hussars of the Guard of the Supreme Powers, were named hussars on 27 July 1846, although they had been allowed to ride at the head of all formations as early as 1843. The uniform ordered on 19 December 1843 consisted of a deep red dolman, without piping but with white cord brandenbourgs and a white stripe down the centre, an ice blue collar and cuffs edged in white tape probably with four rows of twelve buttons each. The pelisse was ice blue with white cord brandenbourgs, a black fur collar, cuffs and edging, and a white suspension cord. A fur busby with a red bag and a three-yard-long white safety cord was the headgear. Trousers were ice blue, with white stripes. The saddleblanket and holster covers were red with a white band and two white bands on the holsters. The saddleroll was ice blue with white bands on it.

Like all mounted men except the Tulancingo Cuirassiers, the Hussars were armed with iron-hilted, straight-bladed sabres and green sword knots. Their waistbelts were white, as were the wide belts on which they carried their *escopetas*, cut-down Brown Bess muskets—quite inaccurate. Pistols, too, were old British flintlocks, smooth-bored and muzzle-loading.

The cavalryman's favourite—and most dreaded—weapon was his lance. This was a long, wooden-shafted spear with an iron point and cross toggles. It usually had a small red pennon on its end, designed to flutter in an enemy horse's eyes and unnerve it.

President Pedro Maria Anaya. (Instituto Nacional, Archaeologia y Historia)

The Artillery

By American Army standards, the Mexicans had more cavalry than needed, and less artillery. The entire army's artillery consisted of three brigades, five foot companies, a mounted brigade and a sapper battalion. Artillery at Angostura consisted of three 24-pounder guns, three 16-pounder guns, five 12-pounder guns, eight 8-pounder guns and a single mortar. There it was greatly assisted by a company of 'Irish volunteers', deserters from the American Army.

Later known as the Volunteers of Saint Patrick, on 1 July 1847 orders were issued converting the unit from artillery to infantry, regardless of past excellent service in the former arm, and enlarging the unit to two companies. 'Each company will consist of a captain, a first lieutenant, two sub-lieutenants, a first sergeant, four second sergeants, nine corporals, four buglers and 80 privates. The uniform they are to wear is the uniform prescribed for the infantry of active militia.'

The companies were wiped out at Churubusco, and many of the men later hanged as deserters by the Americans. The few survivors and new deserters formed a new Volunteers of Saint Patrick which was finally disbanded in the summer of 1848.

Mexican artillery by itself at Palo Alto consisted of only eight guns, none larger than an 8-pounder, and mostly 4-pounders.

Foot artillerymen wore dark blue coats and trousers. Their crimson collars were embroidered with a yellow silk exploding grenade with the numbers one to four for brigades and one to five for standing companies. Cuffs, turnbacks, lining and piping were also crimson. Officers wore this coat plain, but other ranks' coats also had black lapels with seven buttonholes trimmed in yellow pointed tape and yellow fringeless epaulettes. All ranks had brass-trimmed shakos with a crossed cannon badge in front.

Mounted artillerymen wore the same, only with a short jacket with three half-inch-wide diagonal bands on each arm and a $1^1/_2$-inch band around the cuffs. Trousers were the same as cavalrymen's. Mounted Mexican artillery was not as mobile as American, however.

The Specialists

The Mexican Engineer Corps had been founded on 30 June 1838 with a brigadier-general as its director. It had ten senior and forty junior officers and a sapper battalion of 600 men in six companies. The first and second, miner and pontonier, companies were considered grenadiers and had three buglers, while the other companies had a captain, two lieutenants, five non-commissioned officers, two drummers, a fifer and seventy-eight sappers each.

They wore dark blue coats with black collars and lapels and crimson cuffs, turnbacks, linings and piping. Buttons were yellow, and coats had vertical pocket flaps with a wave and a cord. Officers carried special model swords, and carried canes like senior infantry officers. Trousers were medium blue with crimson stripes. Shakos had pompons for all men in the Sapper Battalion, and tufts for officers

Mexican regimental colour. (North Carolina Museum of History)

serving on staffs. Grey frock overcoats were worn in bad weather.

The Military Medical Corps, founded in 1836, was enlarged in 1846. At its head was an inspector-general, ranking as a brigadier-general, with a colonel as hospital director, eight lieutenant-colonel hospital professors, forty army surgeons ranked as battalion commandants, forty captains first-adjutants, forty lieutenants second-adjutants, thirty sub-lieutenant aspirants, and a large number of 'meritorious students'.

In the field there were eight ambulance men to every 100 combatants, organized into ambulance companies. The other ranks were first-attendants, equal to a sergeant, and second-attendants, equal to a corporal. They received medical training, especially learning to work the army's Algerian-Mexican model stretcher, based on the French *littère* and *cacolets* of the African campaigns. They wore the uniform of the regiment they had originally been posted to, and also received white cotton frock coats for service. Their weapons included infantry swords and a lance per man.

Medical officers wore dark blue coats and trousers with gold stripes. The coats had crimson piping and gilt buttons. They wore black fore-and-aft hats, and carried swords in black patent leather scabbards with gold furnishings and sword knots.

The inspector-general's hat had a wavy gold lace edging and white plume. Horizontal crimson piping was worn around his coat collar's centre, with a gold embroidered row of laurel leaves above and oak leaves below that. Indented gold tape was worn around the collar and cuff edges. The hospital director had the same dress, but with a tricolour plume on his hat and only one row of embroidery on his collar, made up of half oak leaves and half laurel,

Hospital professors had the same basic coat with two red-piped buttonholes on the collar, the top surrounded with gold laurel and the bottom with oak leaves. Their gold tape edging was smooth, Army surgeons had one such buttonhole on their collars. First-adjutants had the same, but plain hats and their two collar buttonholes were trimmed with plain gold lace and there was no lace on the rest of the coat. Second-adjutants had only one such buttonhole,

In the field, all officers wore dark blue, lapel-less coats or plain short jackets with crimson piping and yellow accessories, with dark blue trousers with crimson stripes down each leg. They all carried

Busby plate of the Grenadiers of the Guard of the Supreme Powers. (Smithsonian Institution)

black patent leather surgical instrument boxes on parade, which were covered with red kid leather in the field.

The Staff

Generals had the most elaborate uniforms of all—mostly designed to their own personal tastes. A division-general wore a dark blue coat with scarlet piping, lapels, cuffs, turnbacks and collars. On the cuffs and lapels he had two rows of gold embroidery of palm, laurel and olive branches interwoven, with one such row on his collar. Santa Anna had one coat with fifteen pounds of gold thread used in this embroidery!

The gold epaulettes had a silver eagle in each crescent. The sash was sky-blue with five-inch-long gold fringes and knots with two rows of embroidery the same as the coat. Trousers had a row of embroidery down each leg, and were dark blue. The hat was a fore-and-aft type with wide gold lace, a white plume, a tricolour cockade and a tuft of tricolour rooster feathers on top.

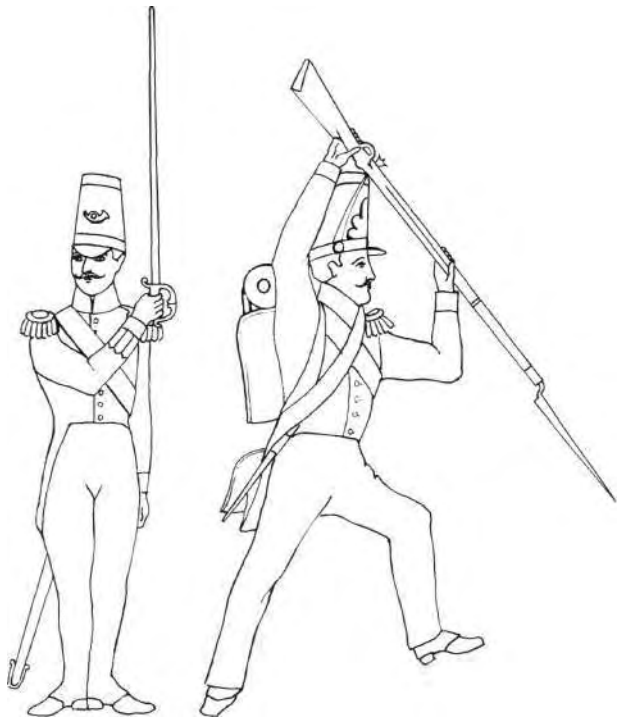
A brigadier-general had the same uniform only with one, not two, embroidered rows on his coat and a green sash with the same fringes but with only one row of embroidery on the knots.

In the field, generals often wore plainer, all-blue coats, with embroidered collars and cuffs, a single row of gilt buttons, gold shoulder straps and the green or blue sash of their rank. They could also wear civilian clothes, again with their sash of rank worn under their frock coat.

From top to bottom the Mexican Army was a magnificently uniformed army. 'It was difficult for them to understand,' wrote the adjutant of the 5th U.S. Infantry, 'how soldiers, dressed in common blue jackets, and their Officers *en negligé*, could stand before the great appointments of the Mexican army.' Clothes, in this case, did not make the army.

Battles and Participants

Although there had been minor skirmishes before, the war began in earnest when Brigadier-General Zachary Taylor's 'Army of Occupation' left the 7th Infantry and Bragg's light Co. E, 3rd Artillery, at hastily-prepared Fort Texas on the banks of the Rio Grande and moved east to secure its supply point, Point Isabel, on 1 May 1846. Division-General Mariano Arista moved his army between the two points, only to be defeated by Taylor at Palo Alto on 7 May and the next day at Resaca de la Palma.



Taken from Mexican drill manuals are, left, a light infantry officer giving a sword signal and a line infantryman in a position of the bayonet drill. (Drawing by Rebecca Katcher, after J. Hefter)

Taylor's army consisted of the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 8th Infantry Regiments; 2nd Dragoons; Ringgold's and Duncan's light batteries and an artillery battalion acting as infantry. Arista's army consisted of the 2nd Light Regiment; 1st, 4th, 6th and 10th Line Regiments; Tampico Coast Guard Battalion; 7th and 8th Cavalry; Mexico City Line Cavalry Regiment, and The Sapper Battalion.

Taylor then moved south and on 22 September, in fierce street fighting, captured Monterey. His army consisted of Twigg's 1st Division, made up of the 2nd Dragoons; 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Infantry Regiments; Baltimore-Washington Volunteers, and Bragg's and Ridgely's light batteries. Worth's 2nd Division was made up of the Artillery Battalion (as infantry); 5th, 7th and 8th Infantry Regiments; Blanchard's Louisiana Volunteers, and Duncan's and Mackall's light batteries. Butler's 3rd Division was made up of Hamer's Brigade of the 1st Ohio and 1st Kentucky, and Quitman's Brigade of the 1st Mississippi and 1st Tennessee. Hay's and Walker's Texas Rangers were independent.

The Mexican defenders under Division-General Pedro de Ampudia were the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Light Regiments; The Sapper Battalion; 1st, 3rd, 4th and 7th Line Regiments; 1st Active Mexico City Regiment: Active Battalions of S.L. Potosi, Queretaro and Aguascalientes; Monterey Auxiliary Battalion; N. Leon Militia; Light, 1st, 3rd and 8th Cavalry; Jalisco Lancers; Active Cavalry of Guanajuato and S. L. Potosi, and six cavalry militia companies.

About the same time, Brigadier-General J. E. Wool was sent from San Antonio to capture Chihuahua with the 6th Infantry, a company of the 1st Dragoons, Washington's light battery, the 1st and 2nd Illinois and the Arkansas Mounted Regiment. Taylor changed his orders, and added his troops as reinforcements.

Meanwhile, it had been decided to open a new front by landing at Vera Cruz and taking Mexico City. Major-General Winfield Scott was given this command and took most of Taylor's regulars for the invasion. Taylor continued south to Agua Nueva when, fearing Division-General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna's superior force, he quickly fell back to the field Americans called Buena Vista and Mexicans Angostura, on 22 February 1847. Despite the fact that the Mexicans broke through

Detail of Mexican artillery officer's coat. Note flaming bomb design on the brass buttons and embroidered on the red collar. Piping is red. (Smithsonian Institution)

American lines at every point there, Taylor's force held the field and the Mexicans retreated that night.

Taylor's troops included a company from each of the 1st and 2nd Dragoons; Bragg's and Washington's light batteries; 1st Mississippi; Arkansas Mounted Regiment; Lane's Brigade of the 2nd and 3rd Indiana; 1st and 2nd Illinois; 1st Kentucky Mounted Regiment, and the 2nd Kentucky Infantry. There were also a Texas volunteer company and McCulloch's Spy Company.

Santa Anna's army included the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Light Regiments; 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 10th, 11th, and 12th Line Regiments; Regular Standing Mexican Battalion; 1st and 2nd Active Mexico City Battalions; Active Battalions of Celaya, Guadalazara, Lagos, Queretaro and Puebla; Tampico Coast Guard Battalion; Hussars of the Guard; 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th and 8th Cavalry Regiments; Line Mexican Cavalry Battalion; Tulancingo Cuirassiers; Mounted Rifle Battalion, and cavalry regiments of Guanajuato, San Luis, Michoacan, and Oaxaca. Unsuccessfully attacking Taylor's rear at the Buena

Mexican shako badges. (Smithsonian Institution)

Mexican engineer's white metal epaulettes. (Smithsonian Institution)

Vista Hacienda were Division General J. V. Miňon's Jalisco Lancers, 4th Cavalry, and the Line Puebla Squadron.

On 9 March Scott's troops landed unopposed near Vera Cruz and besieged that city. His force consisted of Worth's Brigade of the 4th, 5th, 6th and 8th Infantry Regiments with a company of Louisiana Volunteers attached to the 5th and a company of Kentucky Volunteers with the 6th; the 2nd and 3rd Artillery Regiments, and Duncan's Light Battery. Twigg's Brigade had the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 7th Infantry Regiments, the 1st and 4th Artillery, the Mounted Rifle Regiment (dismounted), and Taylor's light battery. Pillow's brigade had the 1st and 2nd Tennessee; the 1st and 2nd Pennsylvania; 1st South Carolina, and Steptoe's light battery. The 1st and 2nd Dragoon companies were merged into one unit and served with the Tennessee Mounted Regiment. Marine Corps detachments were also present.

Vera Cruz was defended by the 2nd and 8th Line Regiments and a large militia force, and soon fell.

Anxious to get out of the coast's yellow fever belt, Scott moved inland towards Mexico City, only to be met by an army under Santa Anna at Cerro Gordo on 18 April 1847. The Mexican flank was turned, and their army routed. Scott's troops consisted of Twigg's Division of the 1st and 4th Artillery (as infantry) and the 2nd, 3rd and 7th Infantry Regiments. Worth's Division had the 2nd and 3rd Artillery (as infantry), and the 4th, 5th, 6th and 8th Infantry Regiments. Patterson's Division included the Tennessee Mounted Regiment, 1st Georgia, 1st Alabama, 1st and 2nd Tennessee, 1st and 2nd Illinois, a company from Kentucky, a company from Louisiana, the 1st and 2nd Pennsylvania, the 1st New York and the 1st South Carolina. Scott's artillery was Co. K, 1st Artillery, Co. A, 2nd Artillery, and Co. H, 3rd Artillery. His mounted troops were Co. F, 1st Dragoons and most of the 2nd Dragoons. The Mounted Rifle Regiment (dismounted) served independently.

Santa Anna had the Grenadiers of the Guard; the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Light Regiments; the 3rd, 4th and 6th Line Regiments (all destroyed in action here); the 5th and 11th Line Regiments; the Active Puebla Regiment (destroyed in action here); Hussars of the Guard; the 5th and 9th Cavalry Regiment; the Mexican Line Cavalry Regiment; the Oaxaca Cavalry Regiment; the Tulancingo Cuirassiers, and eight other smaller units.

The next unsuccessful Mexican stand was at Contreras and Churubusco on 19—20 August 1847. The Mexican troops at Contreras were the 1st and 12th Line Regiments, both of which suffered heavy losses; the 10th Line Regiment; the Tampico Coast

Mexican artillery sub lieutenant's coat. (Smithsonian Institution)

Fore-and-aft hat, with red, white and green cockade, said to have been worn by Santa Anna. (North Carolina Museum of History)

Guard Battalion (destroyed in action here); the 2nd, 3rd, 7th and 8th Cavalry Regiments, and the Guanajuato Regiment (destroyed in action here).

At Churubusco Santa Anna had the 1st, 2nd and 4th Light Regiments, 11th Line Regiment, 9th Cavalry, Hussars of the Guard, Tulancingo Cuirassiers, the Active Bravo, Independencia, Victoria and Hidalgo Battalions, and the Volunteers of Saint Patrick.

Scott had left Quitman's Division, with Shield's Brigade of the 1st New York and 1st South Carolina and Watson's Brigade of the 2nd Pennsylvania and U.S. Marines, as a rearguard. He had Worth's Division of Garland's Brigade of the 2nd and 3rd Artillery, 4th Infantry and a mixed light battalion and Clarke's Brigade of the 5th, 6th and 8th Infantry Regiments. Twigg's Division had Smith's Brigade of the Mounted Rifle Regiment, 1st Artillery and 3rd Infantry and Riley's Brigade of the 4th Artillery and 2nd and 7th Infantry Regiments. Pillow's Division included Cadwalader's Brigade of the Voltigeurs and the 11th and 14th Infantry Regiments and Pierce's Brigade of the 8th, 12th and 15th Infantry Regiments. Colonel Harney commanded a mounted unit including men from the three mounted regiments. Artillery was made up of the light batteries of Duncan, Taylor, Steptoe, Magruder, Sherman and Drum with Talcott's howitzer and rocket battery.

The Mexicans fell back into Mexico City. Scott was told they were casting cannon in the Molino del Rey and took it on 8 September with a storming party of twelve officers and 500 men drawn from every regiment in Worth's Division; Smith's Brigade, Garland's Brigade, Mcintosh's (Clarke's old) Brigade, Cadwalader's Brigade, Huger's, Drum's and Duncan's Batteries and Harney's dragoons.

Molino del Rey was defended by the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Light Regiments, 1st Line Regiment (destroyed in action here), 10th and 11th Line Regiments, and the Regular Standing Battalion of Mexico. The Americans abandoned the post when they found no cannon.

Scott then took Mexico City. Its key was the

The attack on the convent of Cherubusco, by James Walker. Note the sergeant with his N.C.O. sword in the left foreground. (U.S. Army photograph)

Military Academy at Chapultepec, held by the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Light Regiments, 10th Line Regiment (destroyed in action here), Regular Standing Battalion of Mexico, San Blas National Guard Battalion (destroyed in action here), and the Military Academy cadets and professors, with the Hidalgo Battalion.

On 12 September 1847 Quitman's and Pillow's Divisions, reinforced by Clarke's and Smith's Brigades, took Chapultepec. With Pillow wounded, Quitman assumed command of both divisions and, leaving the 15th Infantry to guard the prisoners, quickly moved through the city gates. At the same time Worth's Division, minus Clarke's Brigade, broke through another city gate and the city was in American hands.

Santa Anna guarded the gates with the Grenadiers of the Guard; 1st, 2nd and 3rd Light Regiments; 11th Line Regiment; Invalid Battalion; 1st Active Regiment of Mexico; Hussars of the Guard; 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 8th and 9th Cavalry Regiments; the Michocan and Oaxaca Cavalry Regiments, and the Tulancingo Cuirassiers. As the city fell, Santa Anna fled. He later made an unsuccessful attempt to take Puebla and cut Scott off, and the war dwindled into small guerrilla actions.

Meanwhile, at the war's beginning, Lieutenant-Colonel Philip Kearney, the 1st Dragoons, 1st Missouri Mounted Volunteers, the Laclede Rangers, two regular infantry companies and two light artillery companies, left Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, for Santa Fe, New Mexico, which they

easily captured from local presidial companies and militia. Kearney, with only 100 dragoons, then marched to California which he heard had already been captured.

Before leaving, Kearney garrisoned Santa Fe and sent Colonel A. W. Doniphan to capture Chihuahua with the two artillery companies, some New Mexico militia, and the Missouri Volunteers. After a long march, on 28 February 1847 Doniphan defeated a larger Mexican force made up of men of the 7th Line Regiment, the 2nd Durango Squadron, the Santa Fe Presidial Companies and local militia. He then turned and, after a long march, reached American lines at Saltillo.

Kearney arrived in California during an uprising. U.S. Marines and sailors and locals, formed into the California Battalion under Lieutenant-Colonel J. C. Fremont, took the territory without much difficulty. With Kearney's men, and later the 7th New York and the Mormon Battalion, California came firmly into American hands.

Operations of the Mexican-American War had ended.

The Plates

(Detailed uniform descriptions will be found in the body of the text.)

A1 Private, 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment

The 3rd Infantry was formed during the War of American Independence. Its nickname was given by General Scott when, in Mexico City, he saluted it as the army's 'Old Guard'. This man wears the standard winter dress uniform.

A2 Sergeant, 6th U.S. Infantry Regiment

Chevrons were worn on fatigue uniforms, though not on dress. The 6th was formed in 1812 and since the end of World War Two has been stationed in Germany.

A3 Private, 3rd Line Regiment of Mexico

The 1st Battalion of the 3rd was formed from the Regular Allende Battalion while its second came from the Active Militia of Queretaro. Recruits came from Jalisco.

B1 Private, 1st Cavalry Regiment of Mexico

According to 1839 regulations, the 1st was to wear yellow coats with dark red facings and medium blue trousers. This was changed on 7 September 1845. The unit was formed from the Regular Tampico Cavalry and the Active Militia of San Luis Potosi.

B2 Irregular Mexican Lancer

Chamberlain was in a group which captured an irregular lancer. 'Our prisoner was a guerillar [sic], clothed entirely in leather, well mounted on a small but wiry mustang. He was armed with a lance, a *lazo* [a rope used to catch animals], two huge pistols, a short gun and a sword.'

B3 Corporal, 2nd U.S. Dragoon Regiment

The dragoon dress uniform was different from that of any other corps. Dragoons often wore gold earrings, and their hair was usually rakishly long.

C1 Captain, 2nd U.S. Artillery

Artillery dress uniforms were the same as infantry, with red instead of white trim. The waistbelt is not regulation, but taken from a contemporary Huddy & Duval print.

C2 Private, Company A, 2nd U.S. Artillery

James Duncan commanded this light battery. Today the unit is Battery A, 3rd Armoured Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Armoured Division.

C3 Sub-lieutenant, Mexican Foot Artillery

Although by regulation, the officer's coat was to have vertical pockets, an original one has horizontal pocket flaps. Although Mexican artillery wasn't as mobile as American, its accuracy was well respected.

D1 Captain, 1st Line Regiment of Mexico

The 1st's first battalion was the Regular Morelos Battalion, and its second, the Active Militia of Guadalajara, from where recruits were drawn. Its uniform was ordered for the 1st Active Regiment of Mexico in July 1840.

Voltigeurs and infantry charge into the castle at Chapultepec in this painting by A. Castaigne. (National Archives)

D2 Captain, 4th U.S. Infantry Regiment

The fatigue uniform was designed for comfort. On the march officers carried red or dingy brown blankets, rolled up horse-collar fashion, across their bodies. Many infantry officers bought horses and rode.

D1 Private, 4th Light Infantry of Mexico

The 4th was authorized on 30 March 1846 and given a unique uniform. In the army's 1847 reorganization it became the 4th Line Regiment.

E1 Private, 7th New York Regiment

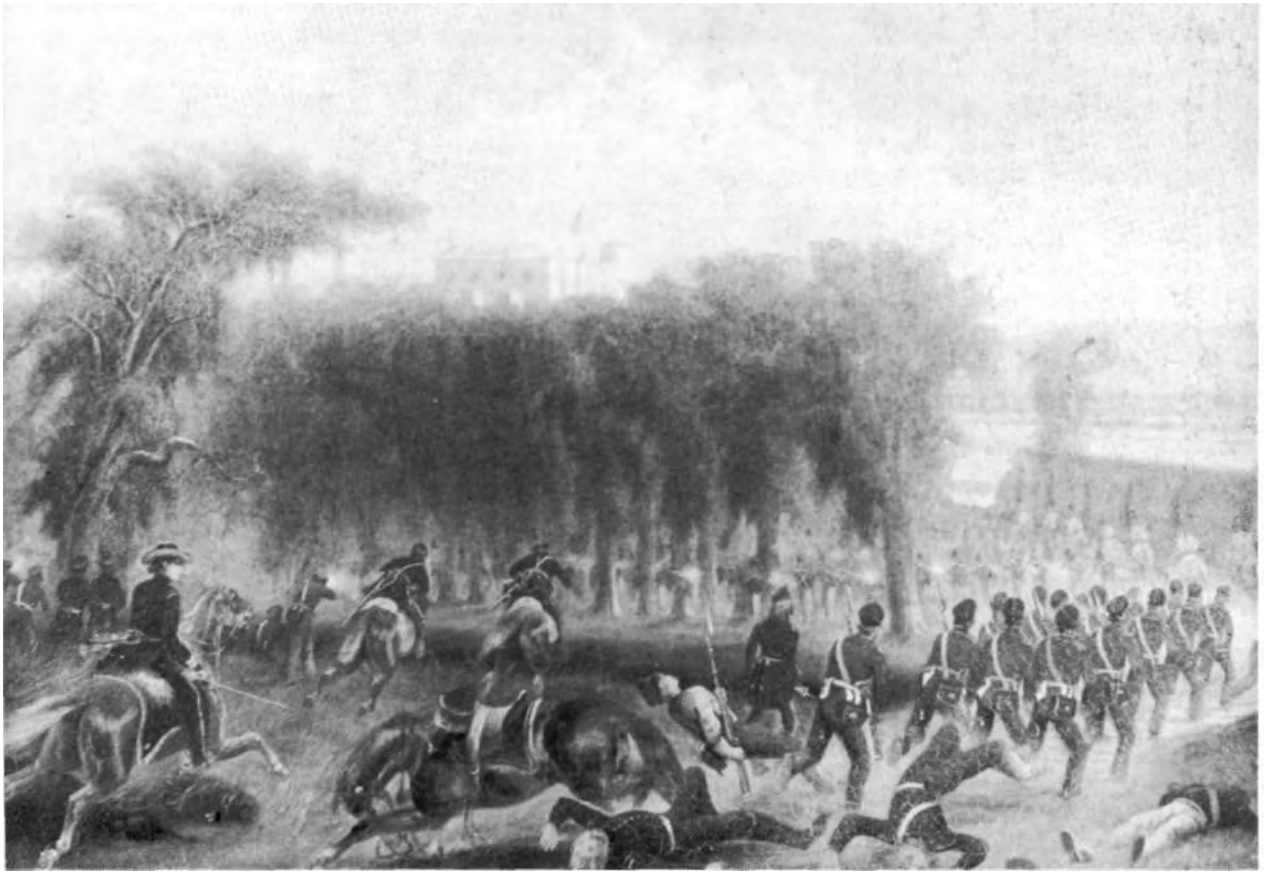
Originally raised as both the 1st New York and the California Battalion, men of the 7th were artisans who were to be discharged in California where they would settle. They and the Mormon Battalion were California's basic garrison and were probably the two best disciplined volunteer units in the army.

E2 Texas Ranger

Chamberlain described them in 'buckskin shirts, black with grease and blood, some wore red shirts, their trousers thrust into their high boots; all were armed with Revolvers and huge Bowie Knives'. Colonel Hays, who commanded a regiment of them, wore, wrote Kenly, 'a round jacket, Mexican hat, and no badge of rank other than a silk sash tied round his waist after the fashion of the Mexicans . . .'

E3 Private, Grenadier Guards of the Supreme Power

The unit was a militia battalion of 1,200 men in eight companies, each with a captain, four lieutenants, five sergeants, two drummers, a bugler, twelve corporals and the rest privates. The regiment had a colonel, a lieutenant-colonel, three adjutants, an armourer, a surgeon, a chaplain, a drum-major and a bugle-corporal.



Pillow's attack advancing through the woods of Chapultepec, by James Walker. Note the informal hat worn by the mounted officer. (U.S. Army photograph)

F1 Private, Mexican Spy Company

This unit served as scouts, for Scott's army. An American reported they 'wore round felt hats encircled with a red scarf and grey jackets. The officers and non-coms wore the insignia of our army. Later their uniform was changed and they wore parrot green coatees with a red collar and cuffs.'

F2 Private, Company A, 2nd Illinois

Typical of the different uniforms chosen by volunteers is this one, although hats other than the forage cap were also worn.

F3 Officer, Tulancingo Cuirassiers

Cavalry made up the best Mexican units, and the best men went into it. This unit was one of the finest of them.

G1 Lieutenant-Colonel, Mexican Engineer Corps

Mexican engineers were often Academy graduates and the most professional of Mexican officers. The Academy fell under Engineer supervision.

G2 Sergeant, U.S. Company of Sappers, Miners and Pontoniers

The only enlisted engineers in the U.S. Army, the unit was called the 'Pick and Shovel Brigade' by the rest of the army. It was foremost in the fights in Scott's campaign.

G3 Field Officer, U.S. Corps of Engineers

In this war, Grant wrote, 'the officers of the engineer corps won special distinction'. The most educated officers went into the corps.

H1 Mexican Division-General, Gala Dress

Generals were allowed much latitude in their dress, but the sash colour and number of rows of embroidery had to be by regulation. Many wore civilian clothes.

H2 Private, Mexican Military Medical Corps

The medical troops on both sides treated wounded men regardless of nationalities. At Cerro Gordo a captured Mexican hospital continued working as if it were in Mexican, not American, hands.

H3 U.S. Major-General, full dress

The U.S. Army's commander-in-chief had light yellow plumes in his fore-and-aft hat, and three stars in each epaulette. In the field, generals dressed as they pleased, and Taylor was known by his brown linen dusters and floppy blue coats.

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Avec annotations en français sur les planches en couleur.
Mit deutschsprachigen Anmerkungen zu den Farbtafeln.

ISBN 0-85045-253-8

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